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DIGITAL GROWTH GRANT EVALUATION (2023/24 AND 2024/25) – TECHNICAL ANNEXES

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Annex A – Analysis of startups and scaleups in the UK

The Digital Growth Grant (DGG) target population was startups and scaleups in the UK. There is no official count of startups and scaleups in the UK. To assess the level to which the DGG-funded activities reached the target population, the evaluation estimated, using different approaches, the possible pool of relevant firms. This annex details the approach taken to assess this target population's possible upper and lower bounds.

A.1 Total target population estimates

Startups

Startups are typically defined as newly incorporated firms, usually operating for two years or less, that are independent and operate privately.

Since there was no official information about startups in the UK, the evaluation deployed two analytical approaches.

1. Using ONS data on VAT and PAYE-based enterprises in the UK in 2024. The evaluation considered firms with 1 to 9 employees that have been incorporated in the last two years. Applying the general share of tech companies in the UK (15.2%) resulted in an estimated total of 54,975 target startups.

2. An RSM report estimated that in 2022, there were 41,972 new technology firms in the UK, and by 2023, there were 51,017. As some of those newly incorporated firms would not have survived, a 40% survival rate was applied to each year's newly incorporated tech firms to calculate a total of 37,195 active startups.

Scaleups

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), scaleups are firms that have experienced an average annualised growth rate, in terms of revenues or headcount, of at least 20% over three consecutive years, starting from a base of at least 10 employees.

The evaluation considered two sources to estimate the number of UK scaleups:

1. A glass.ai report which estimated that there were 12,158 tech scaleups in the UK in 2023

2. The Scaleup Institute estimated that there were 34,180 scaleups in the UK in 2024

The evaluation used these figures as the UK's lower and upper bounds for scaleups. Table 1 presents the estimation summary.

Table 1 Lower and Upper bounds of the estimated target population (tech startups and scaleups in the UK)

Type	Lower	Upper
Startups	37,196	54,975
Scaleups	12,158	34,180
Total	49,354	89,155

Source: Frontier Economics, based on multiple sources.

Regional distribution of startups and scaleups

As with the total number of startups and scaleups, there is no official number of firms by region.

A report from the Scaleup Institute provides estimates of scaleup density by local area or devolved nation. For each local area or devolved nation, data from the 2021 census on population was used to retrieve the number of scaleups in each area (from the noted densities). The number of scaleups in each local area or devolved nation was then aggregated to the regional level. Data from NatWest and Beauhurst's new startup index report for 2024 was used to identify the number of new incorporations. Next, a firm death rate and the assumed share of tech companies were applied to calculate the estimated number of relevant startups in each region. For each region, the two numbers were added to arrive at the estimated regional distribution of the relevant target population.

The results of this calculation are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Reginal distribution of scaleups in the UK

Number of new scaleups	%
London	35%
South East	10%
North West	10%
East of England	8%
West Midlands	8%
Yorkshire and The Humber	6%
South West	5%
East Midlands	5%
Scotland	5%
Wales	5%
North East	2%
Northern Ireland	2%

Source: Frontier Economics based on scaleup density by local area or devolved nation, reported in a report by the Scaleup Institute and NatWest and Beauhurst's New Startup Index report for 2024.

Annex B – Introduction to programme-level technical annexes

Annex C through Annex F present the technical programme-level analysis that was conducted for this evaluation. A separate annex was prepared for each DGG-funded activity within the scope of this evaluation:

- Growth programmes
- EPPs
- Mentoring
- Learning platforms (Eagle Labs Academy, Reports and LifeSkills)

Each annex contains:

- the programme description
- the programme logic model
- the impact evaluation approaches
- the Value for money (VfM) approach (only for growth programmes)
- the process evaluation approach
- the evaluation analysis results

Since these are technical annexes, they only provide the analysis results, without a discussion. These results informed the overarching assessments across all programmes discussed in the main report. Process evaluation results describe the main findings for each programme. These results were synthesised across all programmes to arrive at the main process findings, discussed in the main report.

Annex C – Growth programmes

The growth programmes are a set of BEL-run programmes supported by the DGG fund. The growth programmes were structured business-support programmes designed to provide participants with training around the skills needed for business growth of startups and scaleups in the UK.

C.1 Activity descriptions

The growth programmes were delivered by BEL through six delivery partners (the same delivery partners in Funding Year 1 [FY 1] and Funding Year 2 [FY2]).

Growth programmes' delivery partners and selection processes

To mitigate the risks of non-delivery, BEL relied on tried and trusted partners with whom they had worked in the past and had demonstrated the capacity for programme delivery. For new programmes, they implemented an informal tendering process where BEL evaluated potential partners on their capability, costs, and delivery timelines.

The programme portfolio was based on BEL experience and on past research and evaluation of similar programmes. BEL considered evidence from past evaluations about what works best and is most impactful. This resulted in a set of varied programmes, each focused on different development stages, sectors, and subpopulations.

Table 3 presents the list of programmes in FY1 and FY2.

Table 3 List of growth programmes delivered in FY1 and FY2

Name	Partner	Cohorts per FY	FYs	Stage focus	Description
Product Builder	Plexal	2 cohorts	FY1 and FY2	Ideation or Pre-seed	Designed to help founders proceed from idea to product faster, and to share techniques to validate, develop, test, and evolve a digital product idea. The two-month programme was developed to focus on new challenges and ideas, rather than the existing technical and digital skills of founding teams.
Funding Readiness	Capital Enterprise	2 cohorts	FY1 and FY2	Pre-seed and Seed	A seven-week programme aimed to help entrepreneurs navigate the funding landscape. The programme is designed to help demystify funding and provide founders with the skills and knowledge they need to fund their business growth.
Product Growth	Plexal	1 cohort	FY1 and FY2	Pre-seed and Seed	Aimed to accelerate founding teams from Minimum Viable Products (MVPs) to product-market fit. Over 12 weeks, the founders are provided with education on how to secure a funding runway, access high-growth target markets, and build a team to accelerate development.
Female Founder Accelerator	Accelerate HER	1 cohort	FY1 and FY2	Pre-seed and Seed	Supports female-led technology businesses by connecting founders with experts from across the entrepreneurial landscape in a series of masterclasses, focusing on further developing their business propositions. The nine-week programme includes opportunities for one-to-one mentoring, accountability groups, in-person community networking, and a showcase event.
Black Venture Growth	Foundervine	1 cohort	FY1 and FY2	Seed and Series A+	Focused on business growth and removing barriers to fundraising through targeted support. The 16-week programme aims to boost success through business audit assessments, investment readiness education, and customer acquisition.
Industry Bridge programmes: AgriTech,	Codebase	1 cohort	FY1 only	Seed and Series A+	A 10-month programme that brings together startups and corporates within a given sector to explore industry challenges and innovation opportunities.

Name	Partner	Cohorts per FY	FYs	Stage focus	Description
Cyber, Sustainability, and AI					Each programme provides a virtual seminar each month, where senior leaders from established companies and startups discuss solutions and how they can increase productivity. Each module is designed to teach strategic approaches and innovation best practices. The topics include: • the partnership journey • developing and landing a proof of concept • mergers and acquisitions • lived industry experience
Scaleup programme	CJBS	1 cohort	FY1 and FY2	Seed and Series A+	Supports high-potential scalable businesses, founders, and their senior management by addressing components like go-to-market strategy that are key to business growth. The four-month programme guides thought leaders and industry practitioners through dedicated coaching sessions, peer-to-peer learning, and tailored support that helps founders develop their growth plans.
Scaleup programme	Plexal	1 cohort	FY1 and FY2	Seed and Series A+	Supports scaling companies as they navigate their rapid growth trajectory. This programme was tailored to address the unique situations the nation's fastest-growing scaleups could face. They have a connected, UK-wide ecosystem of founders, mentors, investors and customers. The six-month programme supports scaleups, solving society's biggest challenges through collaboration and innovation to address issues such as building healthy communities and enabling sustainable innovation.

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.
Note: This excludes the three growth programmes that were delivered later in FY2, in parallel to this evaluation.

Three growth programmes were added and delivered in the second half of FY2: Female Founder Pitch deck, Female Founder Startup and Women in Business NI. Those programmes were deployed after it was identified that some VAT from both years could be recovered (18 months after the receipt of the fund). As those were deployed parallel to this evaluation, and no information about those programmes was received within the allocated timeframe, the additional programmes were excluded from the evaluation.

Growth programmes delivery

End participants applied to the relevant programmes through an online form. BEL scored the replies and offered positions to the relevant applicants.

Generally, the programmes were delivered online with some aspects (such as some networking events) taking place in person.

C.2 Logic model

A logic model is a visual representation of the innervation's Theory of Change. Table 4 summarises the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and short- and long-term impacts of the mentoring programme that this evaluation aims to assess.

Table 4 Logic model – Growth programmes

Component	Sub-component	Description
Input	Programme administration funding	BEL staff time for selection of delivery partners, monitoring, marketing, and overall programme management.
Funding provided to local delivery partners	Operational costs	Funding for staff costs, marketing, and overheads.
Funding provided to local delivery partners	Infrastructure	Access to facilities (such as labs, co-working spaces, tech parks, testing facilities, networking venues, and showcase events), as well as specialised equipment.
Funding provided to local delivery partners	Partnerships	Collaborations with universities, industry experts, networks, local governments, etc.
Funding provided to local delivery partners	Expertise	Mentorship and coaching, including from industry experts, academics, and consultants.
Funding provided to local delivery partners	Training materials	Content for workshops, training, and reports.
Funding provided to local delivery partners	Digital platform	Digital delivery platforms for online sessions and for providing resources.

Component	Sub-component	Description
Activities	Learning and training	In-person and online sessions on targeted areas such as digital skills, entrepreneurship, business growth, and commercialisation strategies.
Activities	Mentorship and coaching	One-on-one guidance from sector experts, helping participants refine business strategies and build competencies.
Activities	Networking events	Facilitated events connecting participants with peers, potential investors and customers, industry professionals and experts, or business networks.
Activities	Funding application support	Support with grant writing, pitch preparation, funding applications, and partner selection for collaborative projects.
Activities	Promotional support	Marketing and promotional support, including brand-building and press opportunities.
Activities	Showcase events	Events to show programme participants' innovation to potential investors and customers, including a demo day.
Activities	Signposting of other DGG-funded activities	Raising participants' awareness of other DGG-funded activities beyond the programme in which they participate.
Outputs	Number of participants	Total count of individuals and businesses engaged across the programmes, including demographic data.
Outputs	Hours of training or learning	Total hours spent in training, workshops, mentoring, and other support activities.
Outputs	Number of learning resources, topic guides, or reports published	Total number of learning modules or reports released.
Outputs	Number of networking sessions delivered	The number of networking sessions and participants: peer-to-peer networking with programme participants, potential investors and customers, industry professionals and experts, and business networks.

Component	Sub-component	Description
Outputs	Connections established	Number of new connections formed between participants and mentors, peers, investors, or industry partners.
Outputs	User satisfaction	Participant feedback regarding the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of the programme activities.
Outputs	Products or prototypes developed	The new products, technology prototypes, or service models that were developed.
Outputs	Funding applications submitted	Total grant applications, investment pitches, and collaborative funding requests completed by participants.
Outcomes	Improved skills and confidence	Participants gain enhanced skills and confidence in various areas, including research and development (R&D), entrepreneurship, business management, digital marketing, pitching, and presenting.
Outcomes	Enhanced sector awareness	Participants develop a deeper understanding of sector-specific challenges and opportunities.
Outcomes	R&D progress	Advances in developing MVPs, prototypes, and new supported features.
Outcomes	Technology innovation	Introduction of new tech solutions across sectors such as healthcare, sustainability, and artificial intelligence (AI).
Outcomes	Improved funding readiness	Better access to capital and funding opportunities through grants, investments, and partnerships.
Outcomes	Expanded networks	Increased size and diversity of companies' industry networks.
Short- or mid-term impacts	Stronger tech ecosystems	Enhanced innovation and collaboration within local tech communities.
Short- or mid-term impacts	More diverse tech sector	Increased diversity and inclusion, with greater participation from underrepresented groups and businesses outside established tech hubs.
Short- or mid-term impacts	Improved commercialisation	Businesses become more investable and better positioned to attract funding and scale.

Component	Sub-component	Description
Short- or mid-term impacts	Increased funding	Higher level of funding for UK startups and scaleups.
Short- or mid-term impacts	Workforce development	Creation of a job-ready workforce equipped with digital and entrepreneurial skills to meet industry needs.
Short- or mid-term impacts	Environmental benefits	Positive ecological impact through sustainable technologies and practices, especially in GreenTech and AgriTech.
Long-term impacts	Economic growth	Economic benefits like local employment and GDP growth and bolstered regional tech clusters.

Source: Frontier Economics.

C.3 Impact evaluation approach

An impact evaluation aims to assess if, to what extent, and how the anticipated impacts identified in the logic model were created.

The impact evaluation of the growth programmes consisted of two main approaches:

- Analysis of the available monitoring data to assess the outputs of the growth programmes. This analysis helped assess the realisation of the growth programme activities.
- An econometric analysis to identify and quantify the impact on business growth for participating firms. This analysis included the growth programmes and a subset of Ecosystem Partnership Programmes (EPPs), which were similar in nature to the growth programmes (categorised as 'business accelerator' programmes). Hereinafter, referred to as 'accelerator programmes'. Annex D provides further details about EPP categorisation.

The following subsections outline the methods employed.

Monitoring data assessment

BEL provided the following monitoring information about the growth programmes:

- **Participant-level data**: The name of the participating founders' firms, including the sector in which they operate and the firms' Company Registration Number (CRN). This information was provided in separate files for each cohort for programmes in FY1 and FY2. Growth programmes that were commissioned and delivered in FY2 as part of the FY1 VAT underspent were not included in this data (Annex C.5 provides details).
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess the number of business interventions reached across FY1 and FY2 (indicative), as defined by BEL (i.e., the number of

times a business support activity was provided). This information was used to assess the growth programme's ability to achieve the first DGG objective, test whether the DGG objective of reaching 16,000 businesses was achieved (in conjunction with the other programmes' reach) and assess the reach compared to the target population.

- **Limitations**: The data was provided per cohort separately without individuals' names or unique identifiers, due to limitations on data sharing agreements. As a result, the total number of participants does not allow for the identification of unique participants. It is likely that the same individual participated in more than one programme. It is also likely that there are instances where several individuals from the same firms participated in different programmes.

- **Attendance and Net Promoter Score (NPS) data:** Provided on the participant level for each business intervention. NPSs included free text answers from respondents to reflect the scores they gave and any improvements they could recommend.
  - **Use of data**: This data is used to assess users' utilisation and satisfaction with the programme. High attendance rates of programme sessions indicate that participants are finding the content relevant.[1] A high NPS can indicate participants' satisfaction. Comparing these stats between different programmes helps assess which types of programmes performed better. The free text responses to the NPS were qualitatively assessed to identify the main positive points highlighted by the respondents and the common improvements that can be made in the future.
- **Anonymised Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) data:** This is self-reported data at the participant level on the following characteristics: ethnic minority, female and non-binary individuals or other non-male genders, LGBTQ+, and those with health conditions.[2] EDI data coverage for the growth programmes was high (see Table 5)
  - **Use of data**: This data is used to assess the diversity of the participants and test if the DGG target of reaching at least 35% diverse participants was achieved. It is also used to assess if the programmes struggled to reach particular sub-populations (compared to the general distribution of diverse groups in the target population).

    Table 5 provides the coverage of this information for each growth programme.

1 Attendance might also be low due to additional reasons, such as improvements in the firms' outcomes, which might reduce the number of times founders attend sessions.

2 Health conditions were self-reported in the participant registration questionnaire responding to the question "Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?" with options including: "A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D"; "Deaf or hearing impairment"; "A long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy"; "A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches"; or "Blind or visual impairment uncorrected by glasses".

Table 5 EDI information coverage of the growth programmes (FY1)

Programme name	Gender info coverage	Ethnicity info coverage	Age info coverage	Sexual orientation info coverage	Health info coverage
Black Venture Growth: Cohort 1	100%	100%	90%	90%	80%
Female Founder Accelerator: Cohort 1	100%	0%	94%	0%	0%
Funding Readiness: Cohort 1	94%	92%	91%	82%	88%
Industry Bridge – Agritech: Cohort 1	95%	95%	95%	90%	93%
Industry Bridge – Cyber: Cohort 1	86%	84%	86%	78%	81%
Industry Bridge – Health: Cohort 1	95%	92%	95%	89%	97%
Industry Bridge – Sustainability: Cohort 1	100%	97%	95%	95%	89%
Product Builder: Cohort 1	93%	90%	92%	84%	91%
Product Builder: Cohort 2	94%	94%	91%	82%	88%
Product Growth: Cohort 1	92%	88%	96%	80%	80%
Scaleup Programme (CJBS): Cohort 1	88%	80%	88%	84%	76%
Scaleup Programme (Plexal): Cohort 1	92%	88%	88%	88%	88%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.

- **Participants' self-reported location:** A geographical location that was reported by the participants.
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess the growth programme's ability to reach the second DGG objective (providing regional support) and whether the DGG target of having more than 80% of business interventions delivered to participants based outside of London was met.
- **Programme curriculum**: The names of the sessions that were provided under each growth programme (excluding Female Founder Startup Bootcamp and Female Founder Pitch deck Bootcamp, for which details were not provided).
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess whether the third objective of the DGG (access to investment readiness training) was provided. Assessing the NPS and attendance score helped shed light on whether particular programmes or sessions aimed at supporting this aspect performed well.

Econometric analysis of accelerator programmes

Motivation for analysing participants' employment growth

One of the identified impacts of the growth programmes was the business growth of participants' firms. There are many indicators that can be tested to assess business growth, such as a change in revenue or funds and a change in employment.

This evaluation assessed the business growth observed through changes in employment. Since participating firms are startups and scaleups, it is expected that a substantial proportion would not have a stable revenue stream, making this indicator unfeasible for this evaluation. Fundraising is even more sporadic, and making an assessment using this indicator is also not feasible. As such, the evaluation looks at the impact of programme participation on employment growth.

The scope of the employment growth econometric analysis

An econometric analysis that identifies and quantifies changes in employment requires:

- including programmes which are likely to have a substantial impact on employment, so that changes can be observed
- including programmes where the majority of participants have an established business with non-zero employees before and after participation

All growth programmes met these requirements.

In addition, a subset of EPPs addressed these requirements and were included in the employment growth analysis. EPPs categorised as 'Business accelerators' had similar structures, activities, and outcomes to those of the growth programmes. They also had a high share of participants with established firms, which allowed data on their employment levels to be collected. Annex D provides further details.

The analysis included programme participants in 2023/24 (FY1). Programmes from 2024/25 (FY2) have not had sufficient time for the impact on employment to be fully realised.

Employment growth method

The employment growth analysis employed a quasi-experimental regression approach – a regression analysis. Regression analysis is a statistical method aimed at isolating the impact of an independent variable (in this case, participation in the accelerator programmes) on a dependent variable (in this case, the firm's growth). This is done by estimating the impact of growth programme participation (treatment group) compared to non-participation (the counterfactual). The analysis compared the observed employment growth in the treatment group to that of a similar group of firms that did not participate (the control group).

Identifying an appropriate control group is important because participants are selected based on a number of criteria. Therefore, comparing participants to all non-participating firms would likely lead us to overestimate the impact of the accelerator programmes.

The specific approach that was used to identify a suitable control group is Propensity Score Matching (PSM). The PSM is a robust analytical approach aimed at finding a control group similar to the treatment group by identifying firms that have not participated in the growth programmes but had a comparable likelihood of participating.

This approach is particularly appropriate in this case, as it is deployed in situations where participation in the treatment can be impacted by characteristics similar to those that also affect the outcomes of interest. The selected firms are likely to have had characteristics that affected both their chances of participating in the programmes and their overall employment growth. A PSM technique is especially helpful in such cases, as it utilises the same control variables to select the relevant control group and to control for those characteristics when assessing the impacts.

There are two main conditions for PSM:

- **Conditional independence**: After a control group was identified via propensity scores, the assignment of the treatment was similar to a random allocation.
- **Common support**: There was an overlap between the treated and the control in terms of propensity scores. That is, there was a sufficient number of control firms with similar propensity scores to the treated firms.

This section discusses the main steps of the PSM analysis:

1. **Constructing the analytical dataset.** Merging data from different sources to create one composite dataset with information on the treated and control firms, their employment growth and control variables.

2. **Specifying the econometric model.** Choosing the econometric specification and control variables for the analysis.

3. **Matching control and treated firms.** Identifying the firm characteristics which predict programme participation and constructing control variables for these characteristics. Using the control variables, propensity scores are calculated, which are in turn used to match treatment and control firms. This step includes statistical tests.

4. **Estimating the treatment effect.** In the final step, the comparison of employment growth for treated and control firms allows for the estimation of the participation impact.

Constructing the analytical dataset

The analysis required data on participant firms' characteristics that were likely to predict the likelihood of a firm's participation, as well as data on employment growth. The three datasets used for the analysis were:[3]

1. participant data
2. firms' characteristics
3. employment data

Participant data

- **Data needed**: the analysis required firm-level identifiers for each of the participant firms. CRNs were used in the analysis to uniquely identify firms in the other datasets used for the analysis.
- **Data used**: BEL data on participants in accelerator programmes in FY1. The datasets contained firm-level identifiers, including company names and CRNs. Participants from the following programmes were included in the analysis:
  - Growth Programmes:
    - Black Venture Growth Cohort 1
    - Industry Bridge – Agritech Cohort1
    - Industry Bridge – Cyber Cohort1
    - Industry Bridge – Health Cohort1
    - Industry Bridge – Sustainability Cohort1
    - Female Founder Accelerator Cohort 1
    - Funding Readiness Cohort 1
    - Funding Readiness Cohort 2
    - Product Builder Cohort 1
    - Product Builder Cohort 2
    - Product Growth Cohort 1
    - Scaleup Programme (CJBS) Cohort 1
    - Scaleup Programme (Plexal) Cohort 1

[3] The datasets are combined using CRNs, a unique identifier for each firm.

- EPP Business Accelerator and Early-Stage Venture Support
  - Hartpury University
  - Heriot-Watt University
  - Sheffield Hallam University – Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC)
  - SETsquared Partnership
  - Sunderland Software City
  - Tramsheds Tech

It was possible for a firm to participate in more than one programme, which led to multiple observations for a given firm. As the analysis was conducted at the firm level, each firm was included in the analysis only once.

Only firms for which CRN information was available were included in the analysis. Since the analysis required the identification of employment data, only established firms with a CRN could be included in the analysis. CRNs were only available for 925 of the 1,173 unique participant firms (1,081 growth programmes and 92 EPP business accelerator participants).

After adjusting for firms with multiple programme participation, CRNs were available for 858 unique firms.

Firms' characteristics

- **Data needed**: The analysis required data on firm characteristics, which were expected to predict the likelihood of firms' participation in growth programmes or business-accelerator-type EPPs. Data on firm characteristics were also required to identify control firms.
- **Data used**: Beauhurst data was used for information on firm characteristics. Beauhurst is a proprietary database that collects information on startups and fast-growing firms through web crawling of regulatory filings and various other sources of company information. The dataset was also used:
  - to obtain data on firm characteristics for treated firms. Beauhurst includes data from Companies House, companies' accounts, and various other details, such as information on accelerator attendance. CRNs from participant data were used to identify and download data for treated firms.
  - to provide a pool of potential control firms which were likely to be similar to treated firms, such as fast-growing technology companies.
- **Data processing:** To improve similarity between the treated and control groups, the following methodology was applied:
  - Characteristics data: Downloaded for treated firms available in Beauhurst. Only firms with an 'active' Companies House status were used for the treated sample. This excludes dormant or otherwise inactive companies, as it is unlikely to obtain data on employment for these companies.

- Economic sectors: Five-digit SIC codes were obtained for each treatment firm. This data is used to calculate the 'intensity index'. The 'intensity index' is defined as the number of firms with a given SIC code divided by the total number of firms.[4,5]
- SIC codes with an intensity index below 200% are excluded from the pool of potential control firms. This is done to include only control firms from sectors which are significantly more likely to be present in the treated sample compared to the overall pool of firms in Companies House.
- Beauhurst data is downloaded for control firms where the firms are selected randomly within a given SIC code using the composition of SIC codes calculated above. For example, 20% of the control sample will comprise a random sample of firms with SIC code 62012. Only firms incorporated between 20 April 2008 and 20 April 2024 with an 'active' Companies House status are added to the sample.[6]

Table 6 shows the variables downloaded from Beauhurst.

Some of the variables are used to filter the Beauhurst data and generate a control sample similar to the treated firms, as discussed. Other variables are used to identify firms' websites or LinkedIn pages, which are used to obtain employment records in a separate dataset. Most of the variables are used as control variables to predict the likelihood of programme participation (propensity score) and to estimate the treatment effect.

4 The methodology involves dividing the number of firms with a given SIC code by the total number of SIC codes available across all firms. One firm can have multiple SIC codes.

5 Companies House data downloaded on 1 December 2024.

6 Almost all treated firms (95%) were incorporated after the start of 2008, and no treated firm was incorporated after 20 April 2024.

Table 6 Beauhurst dataset variables

Variable	Source in Beauhurst	Use of variable
LinkedIn URL	LinkedIn Page variable	Obtaining employment data
Web URL	Website variable	Obtaining employment data
Status	Companies House Status variable	Filtering of sample
Sector	SIC Codes 2007 variable	Filtering of sample and control variable
Incorporation date	Incorporation Date Companies House variable	Filtering of sample and control variable
Region	Based on the Registered Address variable. When not available, based on the Head Office Address and the Trading Address.	Control variable
Received equity funding	Whether the firm has received equity funding. From 'Tracking reasons – Has received equity funding' variable.	Control variable
Attended accelerator	Whether the firm has attended an accelerator. From 'Tracking reasons – Has attended an accelerator' variable.	Control variable
Gender balance	Director gender balance (% female) variable	Control variable
Tech or IP-based firm	Whether the business is a 'Technology/IP-based'. From the 'Top-Level Sectors' variable.	Control variable

Source: Frontier Economics, based on Beauhurst.

Employment data

- **Data needed**: Employment data is necessary for three time periods to calculate employment growth rates before and after programme participation.
- **Data use**: Employment data is available in the Business Structure Database (BSD). The latest BSD data available at the time of this evaluation included quarterly employment data up to March 2024. However, many of the growth programmes and business accelerator-type EPPs did not conclude by March 2024. Therefore, it was not feasible to measure the impact of programme participation using BSD data.

  The LinkedIn and Web URLs obtained from Beauhurst are used to collect employment data from glass.ai. It is not possible to obtain employment data for firms without URLs

from Beauhurst. There are 634 treated firms and 7,220 control firms with sufficient records to obtain employment data.[7]

Glass.ai used web crawling of firms' LinkedIn pages to identify the number of employees.[8] The data reflects the number of individuals who self-selected the firm as their employer.

- **Advantages and disadvantages of this approach:**
  - The **advantage** of this approach is that it allows for the identification of employment trends in a short time period. This is in contrast to large publicly available datasets (e.g. BSD), which are updated periodically and are published with a time lag.
  - The **disadvantage** is that LinkedIn does not necessarily record the number of employees accurately. Not all firms have a presence on LinkedIn, and even if they do, it is likely that only a subset of a given firm's employees use LinkedIn. Furthermore, some employees may not update their employment status frequently.
- **Limitations:**

  It is likely that using LinkedIn data introduces a measurement error. Overall, LinkedIn data is likely to understate or overstate the true number of employees. However, the analysis focuses on employment growth rather than employment levels, and it is assumed that the measurement error remains constant over time.

  The measurement error may be a challenge, in particular for smaller firms which appear in LinkedIn with (incorrect) zero employees but employ a few people (for example, one to three). This is a limitation of the approach when applied to startups and small, high-growth firms. However, LinkedIn's frequent updating of employment data relative to other datasets is particularly helpful for these types of firms.[9]

  Employment data was collected for three points in time, which were identified to allow a sufficient gap between measurements, align with programme timelines, and maximise data availability (in each case, a one- to two-month window for data collection).

7 This includes treated firms for which glass.ai was able to find URL records which was not available from Beauhurst.

8 For a small number of treated firms, where LinkedIn was not available, information from the firms' websites was used.

9 For firms that are active, according to Companies House, but have zero employees or are missing data on employment in a given period, a sensitivity analysis was used. In this analysis, it was assumed that these firms had a single employee for the period (the founder). The econometric results for this sensitivity were not statistically significant.

Table 7 shows the time periods for which employment data was collected.

Table 7 Employment data collection periods and descriptions

Time period	Description
June to July 2022	About one year prior to the start of programme participation for treated firms.
May to June 2023	Baseline period immediately before participation.
January 2025	Latest time for which data is available to allow the longest potential gap in time after participation for the benefits to appear.

Source: Frontier Economics.

- **Data processing:**

The econometric analysis includes employment growth as its outcome of measurement. In particular, it estimates the changes in employment growth before and after participation. As such, the analysis required two employment growth rates: before and after programme participation.

The employment growth rates are adjusted for the length of time between the 'before' and 'after' periods. This allows calculating the 12-month equivalent employment growth rates, as preseted in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Formula used for adjustment to 12 months employment growth

$$Employment\ growth_{before} = \left(\frac{Employment_{2023}}{Employment_{2022}}\right)^{\frac{12}{11}} - 1$$

$$Employment\ growth_{after} = \left(\frac{Employment_{2025}}{Employment_{2023}}\right)^{\frac{12}{19.5}} - 1$$

Source: Frontier Economics.

Note: Growth rates are converted to 12-month growth rates. The numbers in the equations correspond to the length in months of the period from which the growth rates are converted. For example, the growth rate for the 'before' period is initially available for an 11-month period, which is then converted to a 12-month period. In the first equation, this is represented by the fraction 12/11 (similarly for the 'after' period)

- **The final scope of firms in the analysis:** Employment data was not available for all firms in the scope for the three data points. To calculate the before and after employment growth rates, the analysis required employment data for the three time periods mentioned in Table 7 to be available for firms to be included in the analysis. There were 302 treated

and 5,004 control firms that had non-zero employment in 2022 and 2023, which allowed the calculation of the growth rates.[10]

- **Exclusion of large firms:** Large firms are likely to have very different growth dynamics compared to smaller firms. For large treated firms, it is likely that only a small team within the firm participated in a given programme. The impact of programme participation is expected to be negligible at the company level for these firms. As a result, only firms with fewer than 250 employees were included in the analysis. This value is often seen as the threshold between Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and larger firms.[11] This adjustment yields a sample size for the analysis comprising 290 treated firms and 4,859 control firms.

Table 8 presents the changes from the initial sample size to the final sample size, which accounts for the required steps mentioned above.

Table 8 Summary for obtaining the final sample size

Sample stage	Treated sample size	Control sample size
Starting sample size	1,173	Not Applicable
Unique firms with available CRNs	858	Not Applicable
Firms with active Companies House status with URLs for employment data	634	7,220
Firms with non-zero employment for 2022/23 and available employment data for 2025	302	5,004
Excluding firms with over 249 employees in 2023	290	4,859

Source: Frontier Economics.

Specifying the econometric model

As discussed above, the PSM technique includes four main steps:

1. Estimating the propensity of participation of treatment and control firms
2. Identifying the relevant control group
3. Assessing the impact of employment growth on participation
4. Statistical test

[10] Zero employment in 2025 is allowed (January).

[11] See Table A in the Business population estimates for the UK and regions (2024): statistical release. gov.uk.

The following discusses each of those steps.

Estimating the propensity of participation for treatment and control firms

A probit regression[12] uses firms' participation status and observable characteristics (control variables), which are expected to impact the probability of participation. The result allows for estimating firms' propensity to participate in light of their characteristics.

The control variables used in this step are the same ones that will be used later in Stage 3. As discussed above, the PSM used controls that affect participation and were likely to affect the outcome of interest. Relevant controls for this analysis were:

- Firms with high employment growth prior to programme participation may be more likely to apply for accelerator programmes (including growth programmes and EPPs) and show higher growth later on.
- Accelerator programmes target firms in the digital sector, including specific fields such as sustainability and health. Being part of those sectors can also affect firms' growth.
- Other control variables are included to account for the firm characteristics.

12 A probit regression is used for modelling binary outcome variables.

Table 9 presents a comprehensive list of controls used.

Table 9 Control variables

Variable	Description	Source
Employment growth 'before'	Employment growth in the year prior to programme participation.	glass.ai
Tech sector (SIC 58 to 63)	Dummy variable for SIC codes 58 to 63. The evaluation used the SIC codes from Section J (SIC 58 to 63), Information and Communication, as a proxy for the tech sector, as these codes make up the majority of the definition used by DSIT. Variable equal to 1 for firms in sectors with two-digit SIC codes 58 to 63 and 0 otherwise.	Beauhurst
Region	Two region dummies, separately for firms in London and in the 'East' (South East and East of England). These are the regions ranked highest in TechUK's Local Digital Index (2023). Variable equal to 1 for firms in the given region and 0 otherwise.	Beauhurst
The firm is maximum 3 years old	Dummy variable indicating the age of the firm (time since establishment) at baseline (before the programme start). Variable equal to 1 if the firm is at most 3 years old and 0 otherwise.	Beauhurst
Employment at baseline	The number of employees of the firm at baseline (i.e. before programme start).	glass.ai
Received equity funding	Dummy variable equal to 1 if the firm has received equity funding and 0 otherwise.	Beauhurst
Attended accelerator	Dummy variable equal to 1 if the firm has attended an accelerator and 0 otherwise.	Beauhurst
Tech or IP-based firm	Dummy variable equal to 1 if the firm is a 'Technology or IP-based' firm based on the 'Top-Level Sectors' variable available in Beauhurst and 0 otherwise.	Beauhurst
Gender balance	Director gender balance (% female) variable.	Beauhurst

Source: Frontier Economics, based on Beauhurst.

The predicted propensity (based on the probit results) for participation is then calculated for the participating and control firms.

Identifying the relevant control group

The propensity score for each observation in the sample is estimated in the first step of the PSM explained above. Table 10 shows the results for the probit level regression.

Table 10 Probit regression results

Control variable	Coefficient estimate
Employment growth 'before'	-0.0307339
Tech sector (SIC 58 to 63)	-0.3189455 ***
London (region)	-0.1428225 **
East (region)	-0.1661812 **
Firm maximum 3 years old	0.4174984 ***
Employment at baseline	-0.0016046
Received equity funding	0.0610829
Attended Accelerator	0.5429619 ***
Tech or IP-based firm	-0.079791
Gender balance	0.5001366 ***

Source: Frontier Economics.
Note: (*) significant at 10%, (**) at 5%, (***) at 1%.

Table 10 shows that the sector, region, firm age, accelerator attendance, and gender balance at the director level are statistically significant (at a 95% confidence interval) in explaining programme participation.

The evaluation used the SIC codes from Section J (SIC 58 to 63), 'Information and Communication', as a proxy for the tech sector, as these codes comprise the majority of the definition used by DSIT.

The significant negative coefficient on the Tech sector (SIC 58 to 63 sectors) variable suggests firms in other sectors are more likely to participate in the growth programmes and EPPs. This might be because firms focusing on certain digital applications in other sectors (for example, sustainability and health) are more likely to participate.

The significant negative region coefficients are likely the result of the programmes' focus on participants from outside London.

The coefficient estimates are not significant for the employment growth rate prior to participation, employment level at baseline, and for the two dummy variables indicating whether the firm has received equity funding and whether the firm is a 'Tech or IP-based' firm.

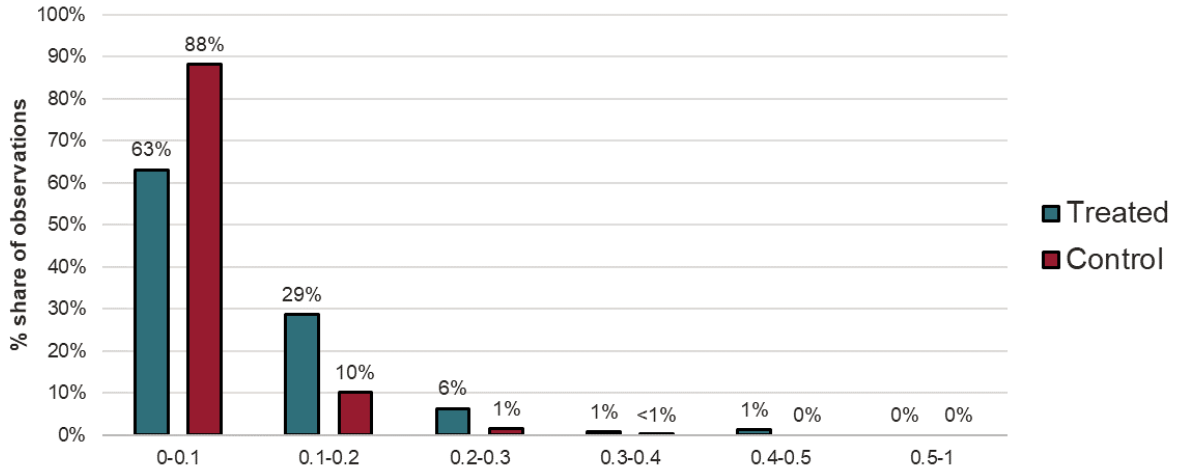
These variables were retained in the model not because of the significance of their estimated impact on the likelihood of participation but because of the conceptual rationale for including them. For example, the level of employment before participation is expected to impact the

likelihood of participation, even though the estimated impact may not satisfy statistical significance.

Propensity scores were estimated using the results in Figure 2 and the observations for the control variables for each firm. The estimation reduced the sample size because not every control variable is available for each firm, making it impossible to assess their propensity. Predicted propensity scores were estimated for 255 treated and 4,358 control firms.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the propensity scores for each treated and control firm in the sample. The chart shows the share of firms with a score within each score bucket separately in the treatment and control samples.

Figure 2 Distribution of propensity scores for treated and non-matched control firms in the sample



Source: Frontier Economics.

Most treated and control firms are distributed toward the lower end of the propensity scores, which is common in a PSM.

Predictably, more control firms have relatively low propensity scores than treated firms. This suggests that the unmatched control group is not similar to thetreated firms group. Therefore, without identifying a more suitable control group, the analysis might introduce biases.

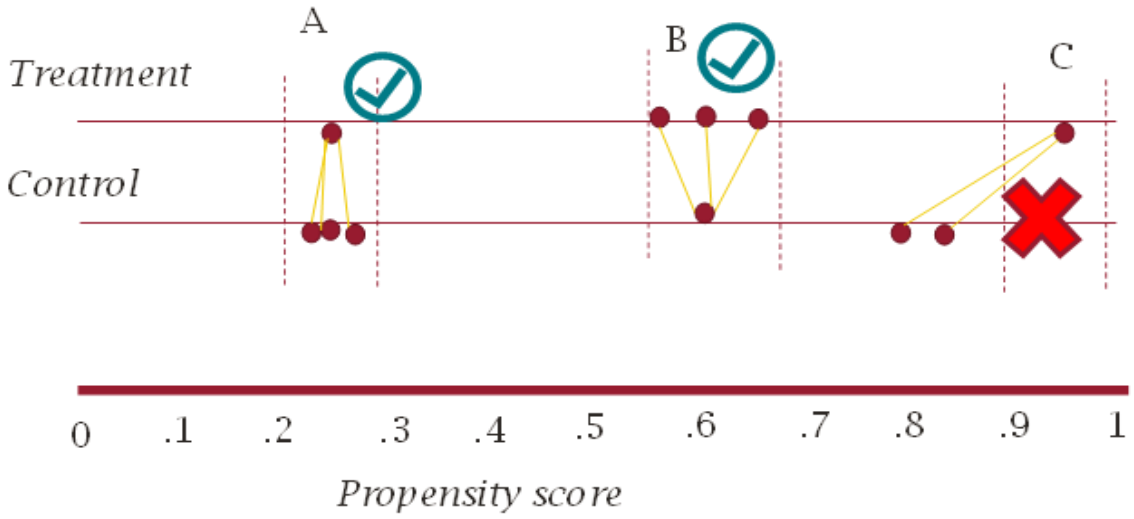
Matching mechanism

There are different approaches to PSM and no clear 'best' approach.[13] The analysis used the 'nearest neighbour' approach. In this approach, up to 10 control firms are matched with a given treated firm based on how close their propensity scores are. The analysis matched control to treated firms where the maximum difference between propensity scores (the "calliper") was

[13] See Caliendo and Kopeinig, (2008), Some practical guidance for the implementation of propensity score matching.

0.1, a commonly used value. This is a simple matching technique that allows the most similar control firms to be matched to treated firms.[14] Figure 3 illustrates the matching process.

Figure 3 Matching control to treated firms



Source: Frontier Economics.

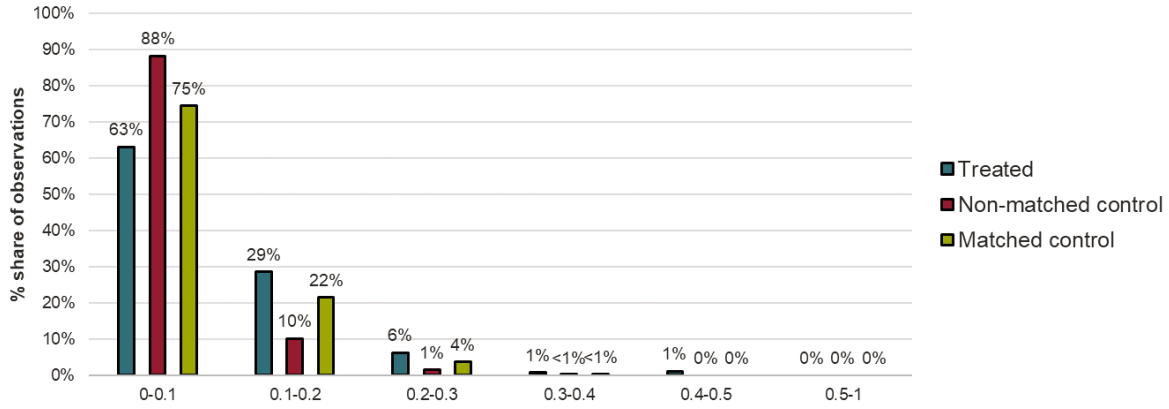
In Option A, a number of control firms' propensity scores are within 0.1 of the treated firm. Up to 10 of these control firms were matched to the treated firm. Option B shows a scenario in which a single control firm might be matched with multiple treated firms. Option C shows a case in which no control firms were close enough to the treated firm's propensity score. If this happens, the treated firm is dropped from the sample.[15]

Figure 4 shows the propensity scores for the treated and matched control firms, and as a comparison, the propensity scores for the unmatched control firms (replicated from Figure 2). The chart shows that the distribution of the propensity scores for the matched control firms is more similar to the treated firms compared to the unmatched control.

[14] We also explored radius matching, which allows matching treated firms to all control firms within a given distance.

[15] There are no such firms in practice in this analysis.

Figure 4 Distribution of propensity scores for treated, non-matched and matched control firms in the sample



Source: Frontier Economics.

Assessing the impact of employment growth on participation

The PSM compares the employment growth changes between the two groups:

- the treated group
- the matched control group

The two groups are considered similar as if treatment was allocated randomly. Consequently, the comparison between the two groups shows the 'treatment effect'. In other words, the difference between the two groups is the level of employment growth associated with participation in the accelerator programmes, over and above the growth they would have experienced without participation.

Statistical tests

To have confidence in the estimates, the PSM model has to pass two statistical tests:

1. **Common Support Test:** It is important to make sure that there is a sufficiently large number of treated firms with which control firms can be matched. If a given treated firm does not have a viable control-firm match, it must be excluded from the analysis.

   All treated firms were matched. This is, partially, related to:

   - similar propensity score distribution for the treated and matched-control firms (shown in Figure 4). This allows for finding control firms with similar propensity scores to each treated firm
   - a large number of control firms (4,358) relative to the number of treated firms (255)

- the fact that up to 10 controls can be matched to a treated firm (which leaves a number of controls for each treated firm).

2. **Balancing test:** PSM identified controls that were similar to treated firms based on their propensity score, which combined a wide range of characteristics in a single number. However, firms may differ in their characteristics even if they have similar propensity scores.

   The balancing test allows assessing the differences between treated and control firms across each of the characteristics included as control variables in the PSM

   Table 11 shows the average value of each variable for treated and control firms separately. The table shows that the treated and matched control groups are very similar. None of the differences between these averages is statistically significant.

Table 11 Balancing test

Variable	Average (treated)	Average (matched control)
Employment growth 'before'	0.22987	0.24682
Tech sector (SIC 58 to 63)	0.54118	0.51882
London (region)	0.34118	0.34196
East (region)	0.18039	0.19922
The firm is no more than 3 years old	0.30588	0.29569
Employment at baseline	14.259	14.511
Received equity funding	0.35294	0.38078
Attended accelerator	0.30588	0.31137
Tech or IP-based firm	0.37255	0.37961
Gender balance	0.30411	0.29142

Source: Frontier Economics.
*Note: None were statistically significant, hence no *, **, *** mentioned in the table.*

Value for Money (VfM) assessment

The VfM estimated the monetary value of the programmes' impact and compared this to the costs. The VfM consisted of:

- an estimate of the monetary value of the programmes' impact
- as assessment the programmes' costs

Monetary value of the programmes' impact

The estimation of the benefits' monetary value requires calculating the items as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Estimate of benefits' monetary value

Source: Frontier Economics.

Estimated % increase in employment

The output of the PSM analysis explained above provides the programmes' impact estimate. On average, participation is expected to increase firms' employment growth rate by about 6 percentage points per annum.

Employment data is only available for the period after January 2025, following programme participation. Therefore, the VfM only includes estimated benefits from higher employment growth for one year.

Average baseline number of employees and number of participating firms

The assessment needs to account for the number of firms for which the PSM analysis was feasible. As explained above, not all participant firms can be included in the PSM analysis.

Several firms participated in more than one programme. Some firms had missing CRNs (not found in the Beauhurst dataset) or had no employment records available.

The sample size was further reduced by the number of firms where it was not possible to calculate employment growth rates. Firms which had 250 or more employees at baseline (in 2023) were also excluded, because the impact of programme participation for larger firms cannot be reliably estimated.

These exclusions result in 290 treated firms remaining in the sample.[16] The average employment of these firms at baseline was 15 employees per firm.

Net additional GVA per net additional job

The additional output generated by each job created by the programme needs to be adjusted for the loss of output via the displacement effect when individuals leave their jobs to move to participant firms:

- For **additional output per job**, ONS data on output per job is used for the sector SIC J (Information and Communication).[17] The latest estimate at the time of the analysis showed £90,017 in output per job in sector SIC J. The broad SIC J sector is used to reflect the wide range of technology-focused firms which participated in the growth programmes and EPPs.

- For the **displacement effect**, information is available on the sectors from which individuals move to a firm in the SIC J sector. This is based on the results of the analysis that was used in the previous evaluation of the DGG. This allows for the calculation of the weighted average output per job for individuals who join a firm in SIC J, including those from another firm in SIC J.

Table 12 presents data on output per job for different sectors, as well as the proportions of individuals from firms in these other sectors who move to firms in the SIC J sector. ONS ASHE datasets show that 41% of employees moving into sector SIC J come from other sectors; in other words, 59% stay in sector SIC J.[18]

16 In the PSM, data is missing for at least one of the control variables in 35 of the 290 firms, leaving 255 firms with full data. The VfM assessment assumes that the 35 firms are otherwise similar to the 255 firms included for the final impact estimation, meaning that the 6% impact estimate derived from 255 firms can be applied to all 290 firms.

17 Output per job by section-level industry aggregations, current price in GBP – Table 12. Available at: Output per job, UK - Office for National Statistics.

18 No productivity benefit assumed for individuals moving into supported firms from other firms in sector SIC J.

Table 12 also shows the weighted average output per worker for individuals moving into (or staying in) sector SIC J. This estimated weighted average output per job of £81,949 is the displacement effect.

Table 12 Switchers from another sector to SIC J

Sector (SIC section)	Output per job (current prices, 2023)	% Joiners (raw data)	% Joiners (including J, rescaled for 100%)
A and B*	Not Applicable	0.8%	0.0%
C	£85,976	6.7%	2.8%
D	£255,690	1.7%	0.7%
E	£129,710	1.3%	0.5%
F	£69,639	2.1%	0.9%
G	£49,654	19.1%	8.0%
H	£48,303	2.3%	1.0%
I	£25,831	5.1%	2.1%
K	£188,986	8.1%	3.4%
L**	Not Applicable	0.7%	0.0%
M	£66,325	19.9%	8.3%
N	£42,861	12.3%	5.1%
O	£75,778	4.4%	1.8%
P	£51,508	7.5%	3.1%
Q	£43,958	2.1%	0.9%
R	£32,274	3.8%	1.6%
S	£44,696	1.9%	0.8%
J	£90,017	Not Applicable	59.0%
Weighted average	£81,949		

Source: Frontier Economics based on DSIT.

*Note: * Not used as not available for SIC A and not reliable for SIC B (Mining and Quarrying), which includes firms with volatile output prices due to commodity price fluctuations. ** Not available.*

Scaleup uplift – upper bound estimation

Programme participant firms are expected to have higher productivity overall than firms in sector SIC J. Supported firms are more likely to be innovative or have high growth potential. An upward adjustment is made to produce an upper-bound estimate for the additional GVA per job created to reflect this.

According to the ScaleUp Institute, on average, scaleups have a higher output per job than other firms. Of the 290 treated firms used for the PSM, 104 firms can be considered scaleups: these firms have between 10 and 249 employees at baseline and exhibit high employment growth on average (28% per year over two years, on average).[19]

The Scaleup Institute reports that tech scaleups (in sector SIC J) are 95% more productive than firms in the same sector on average.[20]

This 95% uplift is applied to the £90,017 output per job for sector SIC J, for 36% (104 of the 290 treated firms) of all supported firms in the PSM, which can be considered scaleups. This leads to an estimated £120,685 output per job for supported firms. This produces an upper-bound estimate for the additional GVA per job created.

For consistency, this uplift also needs to be applied to the output per job in sector SIC J to calculate the displacement effect. This yields an estimate of £101,664 for the output per job lost as a result of moving from another job to supported firms.

Table 13 shows the calculation of benefits in terms of Net additional GVA with and without the uplift for scaleups.

Table 13 Calculation of benefits

Item	Output per job (no uplift)	Output per job (uplift for scaleups)
SIC J output per job (2023 prices)	£90,017	£120,685
Displaced output per job (2023 prices)	£82,891	£102,832
Difference (net impact)	£7,126	£17,853
Difference (net impact) inflated to 2024 Q4*	£7,208	£18,058

Source: *Frontier Economics, based on data from the ONS and DSIT.*
Note: ** Inflated using ONS CPIH data. Available at: CPIH INDEX 00: ALL ITEMS 2015=100 – ONS.*

19 Annualised growth rate calculated between the first and last measurement of employment data: June 2022 to July 2022 and January 2025.

20 Scaleup Institute (2023). 'Productivity' is defined as turnover per employee.

Programme costs

BEL provided cost information for the DGG-funded FY1 programmes, including growth programmes and EPPs.

The cost data was available separately for growth programmes and for EPP partners.[21] Cost types included delivery partner costs and marketing costs.

Some of the marketing costs were not allocated to specific DGG-funded programmes. These costs were reallocated to the growth programme and relevant EPPs, reflecting the share of those programmes' specified costs out of the total costs. The total costs were estimated, excluding VAT.

As discussed above, conducting the PSM analysis for all supported firms was impossible. This means that the benefits only reflect the 290 participant firms which were included in the PSM. Using costs for all participants, whether they were included in the PSM or not, would mean overestimating costs relative to benefits.

To adjust for this, the VfM used the relative share of the costs for the relevant programmes. In particular, the VfM took the share of participants included in the PSM separately for growth programmes and relevant EPPs and applied it to the total costs identified for each. About 26% of the 1,081 growth programme participants and 34% of the 92 EPP participants were used in the PSM. As such, those proportions were applied to the costs to assess the relevant costs for the VfM analysis.

Table 14 shows the resulting cost estimates. The total costs to be compared with the benefits estimated from the PSM are £1.14 million or £1.18 million, after adjusting for inflation to Q4 2024.[22]

Table 14 Programme cost estimates (excluding VAT)

Cost item	£ cost estimate
Growth programmes	£797,922
Business accelerator-type EPPs	£339,843
Total	£1,137,765

Source: *Frontier Economics, based on cost data from BEL.*
Note: *Using the effective rate of VAT of 16.67%.*

[21] These programmes were included in the PSM analysis.

[22] Inflated using ONS CPIH data. Available at: CPIH INDEX 00: ALL ITEMS 2015=100 – ONS.

C.4 Process evaluation approach

The process evaluation sought to understand:

1. which processes worked well, and which could be improved
2. what aspects of the programme delivery assisted in the creation of the observed impact
3. what has been learned about how to intervene in this space and can be transferred to other initiatives and future appraisals

The process evaluation was based on insights from interviews with BEL staff closely involved in the growth programmes, one growth programme delivery partner, and two growth programme participants.

The interviews included questions about the delivery mode of the DGG, the selection process of the delivery partners and programmes, and how the programmes were delivered to end participants.

C.5 Evaluation findings

Monitoring data analysis

Total reach

The total number of business interventions that the growth programmes reached was:

- FY1: 1,081
- FY2: 1,372
- Total: 2,453

FY2 data was correct as of 14 February 2025. These estimates do not include the FY2 growth programmes that were deployed later on in FY2 after the evaluation was already underway (the 'underspend programmes'). These include Female Founder Pitch deck, Female Founder Startup and Women in Business NI.

Diversity of the reach

Table 15 presents the growth programmes' diversity analysis results

Table 15 Diversity Outcomes by growth programmes and EDI characteristic (FY1)

Name	% Female or non-binary	% Ethnic minorities	% LGBTQ+	% with a health condition	Diversity percentage[23]
Black Venture Growth Cohort 1	30%	100%	0%	0%	100%
Female Founder Accelerator Cohort 1*	100%	54%	10%	0%	100%
Funding Readiness: Cohorts 1 and 2**	35%	50%	8%	10%	71%
Industry Bridge – AgriTech: Cohort 1	31%	28%	3%	3%	49%
Industry Bridge – Cyber: Cohort 1	38%	29%	10%	0%	48%
Industry Bridge – Health: Cohort 1	44%	40%	15%	8%	73%
Industry Bridge – Sustainability: Cohort 1	16%	19%	8%	9%	45%
Product Builder: Cohort 1	41%	47%	14%	13%	70%
Product Builder: Cohort 2	47%	52%	11%	12%	75%
Product Growth: Cohort 1	26%	59%	30%	10%	79%
Scaleup Programme (CJBS): Cohort 1	32%	25%	10%	5%	50%
Scaleup Programme (Plexal): Cohort 1	35%	23%	18%	0%	48%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.

*Note: * Female Founder Accelerator Cohort 1 did not have information about health conditions.*
*** Funding Readiness diversity data was provided for both cohorts and not separately. Thus, those are presented together.*

[23] The diversity percentage is calculated as the sum of individuals we define as 'diverse' (female or non-binary; individuals identifying as part of an ethnic minority; identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or other sexuality; with chronic health conditions), divided by the number of individuals who provided EDI information.

Attendance and NPS

Table 16 presents the results of the performance indicators analysis for the growth programmes.

Table 16 Growth programmes performance analysis (FY1)

Name	NPS	Length in months	Live attendance rate	Number of participants
Scaleup Programme (CJBS): Cohort 1	100%	3.9	89%	25
Scaleup Programme (Plexal): Cohort 1	67%	5.7	74%	25
Funding Readiness: Cohort 1	25%	2.8	16%	278
Funding Readiness: Cohort 2	62%	2.4	27%	240
Product Builder: Cohort 1	73%	3.3	61%	101
Product Builder: Cohort 2	68%	3.8	63%	113
Product Growth: Cohort 1	83%	3.8	66%	25
Black Venture Growth: Cohort 1	47%	5.0	71%	20
Female Founder Accelerator: Cohort 1	49%	4.0	82%	100
Industry Bridge – AgriTech: Cohort 1	-40%	6.5	42%	41
Industry Bridge – Cyber: Cohort 1	0%	6.4	59%	37
Industry Bridge – Health: Cohort 1	-6%	6.8	56%	38
Industry Bridge – Sustainability: Cohort 1	55%	4.9	54%	38

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.

Regional reach

Table 17 presents the regional reach of FY1 and FY2 (indicative) growth programmes.

Table 17 Growth programmes regional reach – FY1 and FY2 (indicative)

Region	FY1 – share of participants	FY2 (indicative) – share of participants
London	41%	39%
Scotland	11%	13%
South East	11%	10%
North West	7%	8%
East of England	6%	6%
South West	5%	5%
West Midlands	5%	4%
Yorkshire and the Humber	5%	4%
East Midlands	4%	3%
North East	3%	3%
Wales	3%	3%
Northern Ireland	1%	1%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.

Econometrics analysis

Main estimate

The PSM analysis resulted in an estimated effect size of 0.0597, significant at the 10% level (but not at the 5% level).[24] A 90% confidence interval for the estimated impact is given by a range of 0.0046 to 0.115. This result is normally considered marginally significant. The result suggests that programme participation is expected to increase employment by about 6%.

Although the 6% estimate is statistically significant, using more complex PSM matching algorithms yields statistically insignificant results. For example, when the main specification is

[24] P-value = 0.0751.

run with the Stata command 'teffects' and not 'psmatch', the results are not statistically significant.[25]

To further focus on the impact of programme participation, firms were dropped from the treated sample if they only attended one of the two lowest-participation programmes (Funding Readiness Cohorts 1 and 2). This results in a higher (7.1%) estimated impact compared to baseline (6%), and is statistically significant. This result helps confirm the validity of the baseline estimates.

Table 18 shows the results from different specifications.

Table 18 Impact estimates – sensitivities

Model	Impact estimate	Number of treated firms in the sample	P-value
Baseline specification	6.0%*	255	0.0751
Radius matching	4.3%	251	0.1902
'Teffects' model	4.5%	251	0.2380
Excluding low-attendance programmes	7.1%*	198	0.0891

Source: Frontier Economics.
Note: (*) significant at 10%.

The additional test shows that the main impact estimate and its significance are somewhat sensitive to the specification used. This is not unexpected given the relatively low number of treated firms in the sample, which means that the impact of participation is estimated with a degree of uncertainty.

Impact on employment

When the 6% impact estimate is applied to the baseline employment of the firms that were included in the econometrics, the analysis finds that participation led to an additional 260 employees being associated with participation in the accelerator programmes.

Using the regional information included in the participant data shared by BEL allowed for estimating the region-specific impact on job creation for accelerator programmes (including growth programmes). This is presented in Table 19.

[25] The 'teffects' command involves a more computationally intensive estimation, which might allow for a more accurate estimate of the variation in the regression coefficient estimates (standard errors). However, under the 'teffects' command, certain treated firms are not matched to control firms. As a result, the sample size is reduced, which alters the estimates.

Table 19 Employment growth impacts by regions (EPP business accelerators and growth programmes)

Region	Estimated additional jobs	Share
London	87	33%
South East	45	17%
North West	26	10%
East of England	24	9%
Scotland	22	8%
East Midlands	19	7%
Wales	9	3%
South West	8	3%
West Midlands	8	3%
North East	7	3%
Yorkshire and the Humber	5	2%
Northern Ireland	1	0%

Source: Frontier Economics.

Note: Applying the employment impact to firms that were included in the employment growth econometric analysis using the region reported for each in the BEL data.

Sensitivities

Sensitivity analysis was used to understand the estimated treatment effect for different subsets of the treated sample. The following sensitivities were considered:

- The impact estimate was assessed separately for growth programmes, excluding business accelerator-type EPPs.[26] It is likely that differences in the support firms received and in participant firms translated into different impacts on employment growth.
- EDI was a key objective of the programmes. The impact of programme participation was estimated for firms where the majority of directors are women.

Table 20 shows the results for the impact estimates and their p-values. The impact estimate for growth programme firms alone was smaller and not statistically significant when business accelerator-type EPPs were excluded.

[26] Assessing the impact of business-accelerator-type EPPs was explored but not undertaken because of sample size limitations.

The impact estimate for female-majority (director-level) firms is marginally higher than that of firms in which women are a minority at the director level. However, these results are not statistically significant.

Table 20 Impact estimates – sensitivities

Model	Impact estimate	Number of treated firms in the sample	P-value
Growth programme firms only	2.6%	226	0.4413
Female directors (above 50%)	5.4%	91	0.1615
Female directors (below 50%)	4.3%	164	0.3735

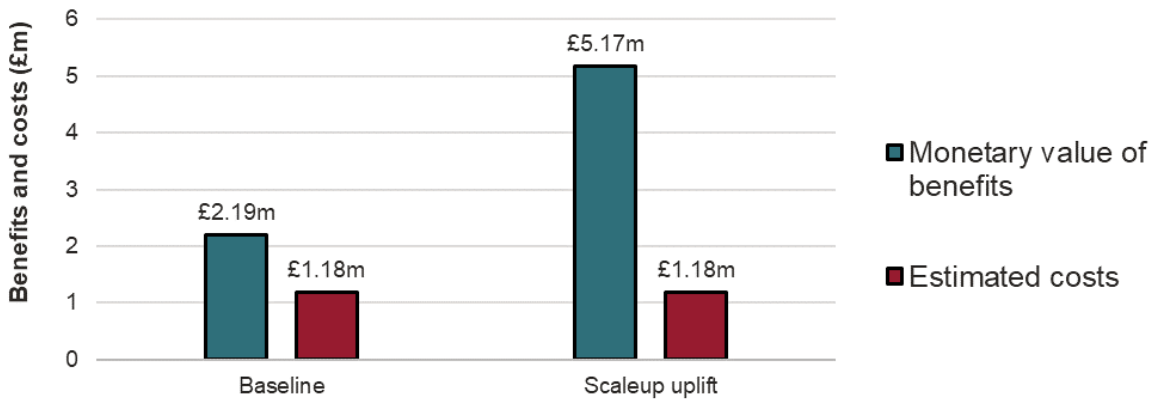
Source: *Frontier Economics.*
Note: *None of the results are statistically significant.*

Value for Money assessment (VfM)

Figure 6 shows the monetary value of benefits and the costs of growth programmes and relevant EPPs. As the chart shows, the benefits are larger than the costs when using the central scenario methodology or when using the upper-bound impact estimates (where the productivity uplift for scaleups is applied).

The baseline estimate for the monetary value of benefits (£2.19 million) is 1.86 times larger than costs (£1.18 million). With the adjustment for scaleups, benefits (£5.17 million) are 4.38 times larger than costs.

Figure 6 Comparison of monetary value of benefits and costs



Source: *Frontier Economics.*

Process evaluation insights

Application of the delivery partner to BEL (including marketing)

Relying on existing and trusted delivery partners made the deployment of programmes efficient. The interviewed BEL staff member mentioned that collaboration with existing partners, utilising tried-and-tested working relationships, was effective. It facilitated seamless communication and strategic alignment. This approach also meant that for most programmes, there was no need to go through a formal application, which streamlined the selection process. An interviewed growth programme delivery partner corroborated this view, mentioning that the pre-existing relationship with BEL helped streamline the application process.

Having a more formal and open application process might have improved engagement. The interviewed staff member mentioned that opening the application to a wider range of delivery partners with a more formal 'Request for Proposal' process might have allowed for a broader market engagement while preserving strategic agility.

Promotion and marketing to end participants. The growth programme advertisement strategy combined several channels. This included advertisements on delivery partner websites and through BEL networks (BEL's website, social media channels, and partner networks). A growth programme participant also mentioned that the advertisements were targeted and reached them through their internal networks, which was marked as positive.

Delivery and monitoring of the programmes

Programmes were agreed upon for the two-year duration. The arrangement with the delivery partners included a programme portfolio for two years. The main motivation for this was the removal of additional administrative tasks that would have been required when deploying FY2 programmes. However, that might have led to a lower ability to change programmes that did not present the desired outcomes. Some flexibility was still allowed; as an interviewed BEL staff member mentioned early in the delivery, there was a realisation that there were gaps for support for firms that are between the startup and scaleup phases, termed the 'valley of death', which was addressed by launching the Product Growth programme.

Working arrangements between BEL and the delivery partners

BEL was supportive of the delivery partners. The interviewed delivery partner reflected that BEL was responsible, flexible, and supportive throughout the delivery of the growth programmes. They mentioned that the interaction with BEL was at an optimum level, neither too burdensome nor insufficient, which helped in managing the projects efficiently.

Annex D – EPP analysis

The EPP is a BEL-run programme supported by the DGG fund. In FY1, the EPP was known as the RPP (Regional Partnership Programme).

The programme aims to support local, non-London-based entrepreneurial ecosystems by providing more bespoke programmes. Given the DGG objective to 'Grow regional support networks for tech startups and scaleups', the EPP is delivered through third-party delivery partners who are embedded in historically digitally underrepresented regions. This means that local delivery partners should be better embedded within the local ecosystem and be able to reach and attract harder-to-reach populations. These local delivery partners should also be able to better understand the regional challenges that startups and scaleups face and provide a more bespoke programme.

D.1 Activity description

EPP programme selection

For FY1, the EPP programmes granted matched funding to local organisations through an application and an Advisory Board (AB) selection process.

The selection process for local delivery partners involved a public application that requested basic company information and then evaluated and weighted the applications.

EPP was advertised via the Barclays Eagle Labs website, social channels, and local ecosystems, inviting applications for match funding. The process included an initial eligibility check, an internal review based on application criteria, and scoring by an independent AB. Applications were evaluated based on project vision, activities, outcomes, and financials, with the aim of selecting partners that would deliver value for the ecosystem.

The application process was structured to identify suitable partners by focusing on project vision, activities, capability, and financial plans, backed by a clear weighting used in the evaluation. The weighting was:

- **10% on project vision**: How the project aimed to deliver hyper-local interventions, which were complementary to existing activities, and how they aimed to contribute towards one or more DGG objectives
- **20 % on finance**: What the overall funding requirements for the project were, and state if their own and alternative funding would also be used
- **20% on delivery plan**: Provide evidence on how the initial activities of the project were to start, and the details for how the project was to be set up
- **25% on project activities, outcomes, outputs, and benefits**: What the project expected the outcomes and outputs to be, as well as what the expected benefits were and how they aimed to measure them

- **25% on capability and experience**: The project work plan, work packages, and plans to mitigate potential risks

The AB provided an independent assessment of ecosystem needs and VfM, ensuring that partners aligned with regional support goals. Adjustments were made to clarify criteria and expectations, demonstrating responsiveness and improving alignment.

After quality checks and initial processing, applications were then shortlisted by BEL staff and provided to the AB for quality ranking. The AB was asked to rank programmes by the quality and relevance to the regional or sub-population challenges. BEL staff considered the rankings and regional distribution of the potential EPPs to select the final list of EPP programmes.

EPP programme delivery

EPP partners delivered the selected programmes independently. This included advertising the programmes to the relevant target populations, running the application process, and selecting participants.

BEL asked EPP delivery partners to provide information on various indicators, which included:

- the number of businesses supported for each module
- the number of new jobs created
- participant information (including location)
- participant attendance for each module
- diversity information to capture EDI metrics for participants
- risk register to discuss any associated risks with the programme
- cost tracker to discuss the overall costs of the project
- information on key personnel

However, the EPP trackers that BEL provided (as received on 10 March 2025) did not include data on all the above questions for every EPP in FY1.

The funded EPP programmes

The EPP programmes were diverse in nature. BEL, by design, allowed delivery partners to suggest both new and existing programmes and provided only high-level guidelines for the programme structure and content. This resulted in a diverse set of programmes that ran across the two financial years.

Due to the diverse nature of programmes, the evaluation categorised the EPP programmes into three main groups based on similarities in their activities and intended outcomes:

- **Business accelerator**: Programmes aimed at establishing businesses. Business accelerator programmes typically had small cohorts and structured programmes resembling the growth programmes (e.g., they included training, networking, and one-to-one mentoring).
- **Skills and learning**: Programmes which provided lighter and more targeted support. Many programmes had multiple components (e.g., Allia) that participants attended selectively. Several of these programmes are also open to founders at the ideation stage (e.g., PhD students).
- **Connection and knowledge sharing**: Programmes aimed to facilitate connections between different parts of the value chain (e.g., between developers and adopters or between developers and academics). These programmes catered to a diverse audience, including traditional businesses and media companies.

Some projects set up one, multiple-day or monthly workshops, one-to-one mentoring calls that occurred over the span of weeks or months, as well as self-paced modules.

Table 21

Table 21 Business Accelerator programmes

presents the FY1 EPP programmes (split into the three categories), their high-level descriptions and their run times.

Table 21 Business Accelerator programmes

Partner	Module	Run time	Project Activity (Activities)	Description or Target	Inputs
Hartpury University	Tech Box Park	4 months	Programme to support digital agri-tech businesses by providing business support, physical and virtual membership services and priority access to academics.	Provides collaborative spaces and on-farm testing to help businesses commercialise their products.	Online training and coaching; Testing and trialling at a commercial farm; Access to co-working space; Networking and Events; One-to-one mentoring and support from business experts.
Herriot-Watt University	DeepTech LaunchPad	5 and a half months	Accelerator programme to provide access to DeepTech capabilities and facilities in Robotics alongside high-quality mentorship and membership to the National Roboterium, which is a world-leading centre in robotics and AI based at HW University.	Offers resources and support within Heriot-Watt University and the National Robotarium, especially for robotics and AI startups.	Access to the expertise and facilities at Heriot-Watt University and National Robotarium; Business mentoring, training, and support from Heriot-Watt University's commercialisation team; Access to networking opportunities and events; Incubation Space at Heriot-Watt University to nurture your ideas and innovations.
SETSquared	Creative tech	15 to 22 weeks	Accelerator programme supporting regional ventures tap into the expertise in Exeter, and explore and develop opportunities to	Supports South West businesses working with creative technologies to become investor-ready.	Dedicated investment training for creative tech businesses led by industry experts; Dedicated Investment Campaign Support

Partner	Module	Run time	Project Activity (Activities)	Description or Target	Inputs
			build relationships that can attract collaborative R&D funding.		including access to an investment raise playbook, a one-to-one session with our Investment Manager, support in launching your campaign on our Investment Platform, promotion in the Investor Bulletin, and the opportunity to apply for a place at an Investment Showcase.
SETSquared	Green Futures	15 to 22 weeks	Collaborative accelerator programme of activities driving economic growth in the region's creative technology industry through investments in R&D, skills and facilities.	Helps South West businesses develop scalable solutions for environmental challenges and bid for funding for collaborative research and development with academic partners.	Dedicated support to apply for appropriate funding calls. This will include help to identify funding, find academic partners and professional grant writing support to craft a highly credible bid.
Sunderland Software City	Ignite Accelerator	1 and a half months	Accelerator programme to support local organisations to scale.	Support package for tech product and tech-enabled companies through a series of expert masterclasses, strategic partnerships, comprehensive mentoring and the bringing together of investors from within and outside the region.	Expert workshops, mentorship, access to labs and testing facilities, industry partnerships, investor access and funding support.
Sheffield Hallam University	Digital Wellbeing Accelerator	1 day to 29 weeks	HealthTech accelerator to support organisations in developing new digital products and services to be	Assists early-stage companies in developing health-focused products or services.	Project brief development; direct R&D support for internally funded projects (academic support, access to facilities, equipment,

Partner	Module	Run time	Project Activity (Activities)	Description or Target	Inputs
			embedded in the regional ecosystem.		and consumables); workshops and events; MBA student support; grant application support; pitch deck development and investment readiness support; NHS market assessment; access to mentor network; access to partner products and services; in-person demo day.
Tramsheds	GreenTech Catalyst	1 day to 3 months	GreenTech Catalyst is supporting green energy and climate-tech startups to accelerate the development of products and services in these sectors.	Focuses on scaling environmentally sustainable tech businesses across Wales.	Workshops; Peer-to-peer session: chaired by successful GreenTech businesses and industry experts; Mentorship programme; One-to-ones; Showcase day.

Source: Frontier Economics' analysis of BEL data.

Table 22 Skills and Learning programmes

Partner	Module	Run time	Project activity	Description or Target	Inputs
Allia Impact	Grow Your Business	3 months	Grow your business	A free programme that focuses on helping entrepreneurs increase business growth and create employment for local people.	Peer-to-peer support and a community of like-minded entrepreneurs, as well as alumni benefits, free co-working days, and signposting to a range of other resources, including fundraising or investment opportunities.
Allia Impact	Self-Paced Learning	7 months	Self-Paced Learning	Deliver 10 to 15 modules that work through digitising	Provide a digital format workshop series with activities,

Partner	Module	Run time	Project activity	Description or Target	Inputs
				key components of the participants' businesses.	homework items, recorded videos, and access to live one-on-one coaching.
Conception X	Education, Incubation and Ideation; Fundraising support; Ecosystem mapping, community building, networks; and Mentorship, Coaching, and IP	11 months with several 1 to 3-day events or workshops	DeepTech Accelerator to help stimulate and support DeepTech startup sectors across 5 regions.	Helps PhD students launch deeptech startups based on innovative research with commercial potential.	One-to-one business and technology coaching; access to an expert network (industry, investors, and academia); Deeptech entrepreneurial training; Show & Tell and community events; Demo Day for selected finalists.
Form Leadership	One-to-one advice	Three 1-hour online sessions spanning 10 days	Programme to support the growth journeys of up to 70 digital and tech SMEs through a suite of industry-specific business support, which addresses the growth challenges experienced in the region.	Provides consultancy and growth support to tech companies in the Liverpool City Region.	Expert-led one-to-one consultancy, two intensive 6-week business support programmes and a growth workshop connecting ambitious leaders.
Form Leadership	Shift programme	4 weeks	Programme to support the growth journeys of up to 70 digital and tech SMEs through a suite of industry-specific business support, which addresses the growth challenges experienced in the region.	Provides consultancy and growth support to tech companies in the Liverpool City Region.	Expert-led one-to-one consultancy, two intensive 6-week business support programmes and a growth workshop connecting ambitious leaders.
Form Leadership	Emerging leaders	4 months	Programme to support the growth journeys of up to 70 digital	Provides consultancy and growth support to tech companies in	Expert-led one-to-one consultancy, two intensive 6-week business support

Partner	Module	Run time	Project activity	Description or Target	Inputs
			and tech SMEs through a suite of industry-specific business support, which addresses the growth challenges experienced in the region.	the Liverpool City Region.	programmes and a growth workshop connecting ambitious leaders.
Form Leadership	Growth Workshop	1 day	Programme to support the growth journeys of up to 70 digital and tech SMEs through a suite of industry-specific business support, which addresses the growth challenges experienced in the region.	Provides consultancy and growth support to tech companies in the Liverpool City Region.	Expert-led one-to-one consultancy, two intensive 6-week business support programmes and a growth workshop connecting ambitious leaders.
Sunderland Software City	Raise Right	1 month	1-2-1 support for businesses looking for investment.	Helps small businesses understand and access grants, funding, and investments through mentoring.	Face-to-face or online mentoring, Industry workshops, Grant funding advice, and Networking opportunities.
Sunderland Software City	Launch	7 hours (over 6 weeks)	Focused on business ideation to support early-stage tech entrepreneurs focused on business ideation to support early-stage tech entrepreneurs.	Guides aspiring founders in the North East on building a tech startup through a 6-week programme.	6-week light-touch, part-time programme: Pre-recorded workshop; one-to-one mentoring; 2 in-person workshops.
University of Edinburgh	Venture Builder Incubator	5 months	Incubator support for local organisations working within the Robotics and Autonomous Systems (RAS) projects.	Provides PhD students and academics with support to commercialise digital or science-based research.	Workshops and events are designed to help commercialise data-driven innovations, offer expert guidance, and provide access to

Partner	Module	Run time	Project activity	Description or Target	Inputs
					networks and funding.

Source: Frontier Economics' analysis of BEL data.

Table 23 Connection and Knowledge Sharing programmes

Partner	Module	Run time	Project activity	Description or Target	Inputs
C4DI	BETA Plus Satellites	7-hour workshops over 5 months	Programmes to support the growth of the number of scaleup businesses across the region by establishing three new hyper-local focal points at existing sites in Harrogate, Scarborough and Selby. The support will include three programmes: Business Base, Business Connect, and Business Scale.	Connects traditional businesses with digital experts to accelerate digital technologies in traditional businesses and help digital experts access new supply chains and work opportunities.	Digital audits of each participating business; Digital workshops and networking events in each area; Digital Champions from within the C4DI community offering one-to-one support with participating businesses; Access to North Yorkshire Council's Digital Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy Grant.
Functional Skills	Hidden Talent	5 to 6 months	Programme to support local startups and scaleups to assess and identify specific problems and skills gaps, and then provide skills, training and support to a targeted group of job seekers or low-income earners and college students.	Connects early-stage companies in healthcare with health professionals to launch digital innovations.	Online and in-person workshops, expert guidance, and networking opportunities.
TheHill	Startup Labs	3 months	Pre-seed programme to support HealthTech entrepreneurs, health workers and researchers. They will provide expert advice to businesses and identify unmet needs within the Oxfordshire,	Connects early-stage companies in healthcare with health professionals to launch digital innovations.	Online and in-person workshops, expert guidance, and networking opportunities.

Partner	Module	Run time	Project activity	Description or Target	Inputs
			Buckinghamshire and Berkshire areas.		
Tramsheds	Convergent Content	5 months	Convergent Content: Empowering businesses at the intersection of Tech and Creativity to bridge the gap between technology and creative sectors.	Connects Wales' tech and media sectors through immersive workshops, events, and mentorship.	Workshops, industry-driven events, and mentorship programmes.

Source: Frontier Economics' analysis of BEL data.

Additionally, 12 EPPs were delivered in FY2. As those were not assessed in full in this evaluation, they were not categorised. Table 24 presents The EPP FY2 programmes.

Table 24 FY2 EPP programme

Partner	Project	Description
St Ives Workstation CIC t/a Bayspace St Ives	Bayspace Platform	Create and accelerate high-quality, digitally enabled learning and founder support opportunities by providing mentoring, training, workspace, TED-type events and quarterly masterclasses.
Tramshed Tech	UniVenture Incubator	Provide comprehensive support for both Student Startup and University Spinout ventures to gain traction for innovative ideas and technologies.
Tramshed Tech	Convergent Content Scaler	Deliver a 12-week programme to support participants to scale up and expand their projects. This includes further funding, resources, and support to accelerate the success of convergent innovations.
Cynam – Cyber Cheltenham CIC	Securing Emerging Technologies	Support Cyber and Emerging Technologies businesses with masterclasses, mentoring, training, events and investment.
North East Business and Innovation Centre Ltd t/a Sunderland Software City	Tech StartUp Programme	Deliver two 8-week accelerator programmes for retail and energy businesses, 121 support for startups, as well as workshops and drop-in sessions with experts.
Suffolk County Council (Connected Innovation)	The Future	Support businesses across Norwich, Norfolk, Ipswich, and Suffolk by providing workshops,

Partner	Project	Description
		networking events, workspace, mentoring, and training from experts.
Manchester Digital Ltd	Startup Activator	Deliver a series of roadshows across the 10 boroughs in Greater Manchester to support businesses with a range of topics, including investment and business plan development. Businesses identified with the highest growth potential will be supported further with access to mentoring, workshops and masterclasses.
Opportunity North East	Scale your Sales: Sales	Create a community of founders with the sales skills needed to scale their business. The workshop series will provide founders with an understanding of the end-to-end B2B sales process in a digital environment, and provide practical knowledge, tools and skills to improve their sales process and practices. The project will focus on Energy and climate tech, Life Sciences and healthtech, and Agri and foodtech.
BetaDen (Worcestershire County Council)	BetaDen Incubate	The project will run 4 incubator intakes over a 12-month period, supporting digital and technology businesses within Worcester. Participants will have access to mentoring, workshops, networking events and access to The Kiln coworking space.
The University of Edinburgh	The Venture Builder Incubator	The Venture Builder Incubator (VBI) is a collaborative incubator focused on academic staff and PhD students, supporting UK-wide academics with research-driven ideas they wish to explore or commercialise. The VBI is delivered over four months and fosters an entrepreneurial culture, enabling and encouraging academics to become founders through facilitated workshops, training, and peer learning, to deliver new technology-based products and services. The VBI cohort 5 will consist of up to 25 businesses. Five health-specific founders will be supported.
D & S Knowles Consulting Ltd t/a Northern Reach	Lancashire Digital Hub	Support the Lancaster ecosystem by providing a series of events, training opportunities and further support. Activities include Digital Tech Talks, Digital Leader events, and annual support for the Lancaster Tech Summit.

Partner	Project	Description
BCU Enterprise Limited – STEAMhouse	Digital Direction (Distributed Innovation driving digital growth)	Create a new SME programme of support giving access to newly established digital tech facilities at STEAMhouse. Participants will have access to mentoring and technical support, as well as workshops, training and a workstation at STEAMhouse.
Milton Keynes City Council	City of Milton Keynes Tech Ecosystem project 2024	Support businesses within Milton Keynes and provide a variety of Tech Forums, Founder Meetups, Roundtables and a National Tech Conference.

Source: Frontier Economics' analysis of BEL data.

D.2 Logic model

A logic model is a visual representation of the innervation's Theory of Change.

Table 25 Components assessed in the logic model

Table 25 summarises the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and short and long-term impacts of the EPP programmes that this evaluation aims to assess.

Table 25 Components assessed in the logic model

Component	Sub-component	Description
Inputs	Programme administration funding	Selection of delivery partners, monitoring, marketing, and overall programme management.
Matched funding provided to local delivery partners for	Operational funding	Funding for staff costs, marketing, and program-specific overheads.
Matched funding provided to local delivery partners for	Partnerships	Collaboration with universities, industry experts, networks, local governments, etc.
Matched funding provided to local delivery partners for	Infrastructure	Access to facilities (e.g., labs, co-working spaces, tech parks, and testing facilities) and specialised equipment.
Matched funding provided to local delivery partners for	Expertise	Mentorship and coaching from industry experts, academics, and business consultants.
Matched funding provided to local delivery partners for	Training Materials	Content for workshops, online courses, and training guides.
Matched funding provided to local delivery partners for	Digital Platform	Digital delivery platforms for online sessions and providing resources.
Activities (not all relevant to each EPP)	Learning & Training	In-person and online sessions on digital skills, entrepreneurship, business growth, and commercialisation strategies.
Activities (not all relevant to each EPP)	Mentorship & Coaching	One-on-one guidance from sector experts, helping participants refine business strategies and build competencies.

Component	Sub-component	Description
Activities (not all relevant to each EPP)	Networking Events	Facilitated events connecting participants with industry leaders, peers and potential investors.
Activities (not all relevant to each EPP)	Research & Development (R&D) Support	Access to R&D resources like testing facilities, labs, and collaboration with research institutions to support product development.
Activities (not all relevant to each EPP)	Funding Application Support	Support with grant writing, pitch preparation, funding applications, and partner selection for collaborative projects.
Activities (not all relevant to each EPP)	Incubation & Acceleration	Structured and targeted programmes designed to accelerate growth and innovation for startups.
Outputs	Number of Participants	Total count of individuals and businesses engaged across the programmes (including EDI data).
Outputs	Participants Satisfaction	Level of satisfaction with the programmes
Outputs	Training Hours Delivered and Attended	Total hours spent in training sessions, workshops, and mentoring activities.
Outputs	Products or Prototypes Developed	New products, technology prototypes, or service models that have been developed.
Outputs	Funding Applications Submitted	Total grant applications, investment pitches, and collaborative funding requests completed by participants.
Outputs	Partnerships Created	New collaborative relationships and partnerships formed between participants and industry partners, research institutions, or investors.
Outcomes	Improved skills	Improved skills in targeted areas (e.g., R&D, entrepreneurship, business management, digital marketing).
Outcomes	Enhanced sector awareness	Improved knowledge of sector constraints and opportunities.
Outcomes	R&D Progress	Advances in MVPs, prototypes, and new features supported.
Outcomes	Tech Innovation	New tech solutions introduced across fields like healthcare, sustainability, AI, and robotics.
Outcomes	Improved Access to Funding	Improved access to capital and funding through grants, investments, partnerships, and increased investor interest.
Outcomes	Expanded Network	Broader industry network, facilitating partnerships and access to resources.
Impacts	Stronger Tech Ecosystem	Enhanced innovation and collaboration within local tech communities.

Component	Sub-component	Description
Impacts	Diversity in the Tech Sector	Improved diversity and participation of underrepresented groups in tech.
Impacts	Economic Growth	Economic benefits like local employment, GDP growth, and bolstered regional tech clusters.
Impacts	Increased Innovation	Advances in technology fields such as sustainability, healthcare, and robotics, helping establish regional innovative hubs.
Impacts	Workforce Development	A skilled, job-ready workforce equipped with digital and entrepreneurial skills, supporting industry needs and employment.
Impacts	Environmental Benefits	Positive ecological impact through sustainable tech and practices, especially in GreenTech and AgriTech.

Source: Frontier Economics' analysis of BEL data.

D.3 Impact evaluation approach

An impact evaluation aims to assess if, to what extent, and how the anticipated impacts identified in the logic model were created.

For all EPP programmes, we analysed the monitoring data to assess the outputs of the EPPs. This analysis helps assess the realisation of the EPP activities and the achievement of the four DGG objectives and the DGG targets.

Additional impact assessment methods were deployed for each EPP category:

- **Business Accelerators**: Given that these programmes are similar in nature to the growth programmes and a large share of the supported firms had established businesses (identified by having a CRN number in the data), these programmes were included in the employment growth econometric analysis. Annex B provides more details.
- **Skills and learning, and Connection and knowledge sharing**: The CRN coverage of participating firms in these programmes was not as wide as for the Business Accelerator programmes (see Table 26). The nature of the activities and the anticipated outcomes mean that it is less likely that participation in these programmes would have led to an observable change in participant firms' employment level. As such, a case study was deployed for one programme in each category (a total of two) to assess more closely the benefits and impacts that those types of programmes created.

Table 26 CRN coverage of participants in EPP FY1 programmes by EPP category

Category	% of firms with CRN
Business accelerator	98%
Connection and knowledge sharing	78%
Skills and learning	27%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on BEL data.

Monitoring data

BEL provided the following monitoring information for the EPPs:

- **Participant level data**: The name of the participating founders' firms and their CRN. This information was provided in separate files for each programme cohort for programmes in FY1 and FY2. EPPs that were commissioned and delivered in FY2 as part of the FY1 VAT underspent (see Section 5 of the main report) were not included in this data.

- **Use of data**: This data was used to assess the number of business interventions delivered across the FY1 and FY2 (indicative), as defined by BEL (the number of times a business support activity was provided). This information was used to assess the EPP's ability to achieve the first DGG objective, to test whether the DGG objective of reaching 16,000 businesses was achieved (in conjunction with the other programmes' reach) and to assess the reach compared to the target population.
- **Limitations**: The data was provided per cohort separately without individuals' names or unique identifiers. As such, the total number of participants does not allow for the identification of unique participants but rather the number of participants. In addition, some of the EPP programmes included several business interactions and are counted separately each time. For example, Form 1-2-1 advice included three sessions per business, which counted as three separate business interventions. It is likely that the same individual participated in more than one programme. It is also likely that there are instances where several individuals from the same firms participate in different programmes.

- **Attendance and NPS data:** provided on an instance level (entry per session attendance and for each NPS response). Attendance and NPSs were analysed for FY1 programmes only.
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess users' utilisation and satisfaction with the programme. High attendance rates of programme sessions indicated that participants found the content relevant. A high NPS can indicate participants' satisfaction. Comparing these stats between different programmes helps assess which types of programmes performed better than others.
  - **Limitations**: Not all EPP programmes reported attendance and NPS data. Some programmes also reported several NPS and attendance scores for sub-modules within their programmes. Table 27 shows the availability of this information for the various EPP FY1 activities.

Table 27 Data coverage by partner

Partner	Programme	Module	Category	Attendance available	NPS available
Hartpury University	Tech Box Park	Tech Box Park	Business accelerator	Data available	Data available
Heriot-Watt University	DeepTech LaunchPad	DeepTech LaunchPad	Business accelerator	Data available	Data available
SETsquared	CreativeTech	CreativeTech	Business accelerator	Data available	Data available
SETsquared	Green Futures	Green Futures	Business accelerator	Data available	Data available

Partner	Programme	Module	Category	Attendance available	NPS available
Sheffield Hallam University	Digital Wellbeing Accelerator	Digital Wellbeing Accelerator	Business accelerator	Data available	Data available
Sunderland Software City	Ecosystem Pipeline Project	Ignite Accelerator	Business accelerator	Data available	Data available
Tramsheds	GreenTech Catalyst	GreenTech Catalyst	Business accelerator	Data available	Data available
C4DI	BETA Plus Satellites	BETA Plus Satellites	Connection and knowledge sharing	Data available	Data available
Functional Skills	Hidden Talent	Hidden Talent	Connection and knowledge sharing	Data available	Data available
TheHill	Startups Labs	Startups Labs	Connection and knowledge sharing	Data available	Data available
Tramsheds	Convergent Content	Convergent Content	Connection and knowledge sharing	Data available	Data available
Allia Impact	EASTECH	Grow Your Business 1	Skills and learning	Data available	Data available
Allia Impact	EASTECH	Grow Your Business 2	Skills and learning	Not applicable	Not applicable
Allia Impact	EASTECH	Self-Paced Learning	Skills and learning	Not applicable	Data available
Conception X	Deep Technology Startups	Coaching	Skills and learning	Not applicable	Data available
Conception X	Deep Technology Startups	Fundraising Support	Skills and learning	Not applicable	Not applicable
Conception X	Deep Technology Startups	Mentoring	Skills and learning	Not applicable	Not applicable

Partner	Programme	Module	Category	Attendance available	NPS available
Conception X	Deep Technology Startups	Workshops	Skills and learning	Not applicable	Not applicable
Form Leadership	Liverpool City Region – Tackling the Growth Bottleneck	1-2-1 Advice	Skills and learning	Data available	Data available
Form Leadership	Liverpool City Region – Tackling the Growth Bottleneck	Shift Programme	Skills and learning	Data available	Data available
Form Leadership	Liverpool City Region – Tackling the Growth Bottleneck	Emerging Leaders Programme	Skills and learning	Data available	Data available
Form Leadership	Liverpool City Region – Tackling the Growth Bottleneck	Growth Workshops	Skills and learning	Not applicable	Data available
Sunderland Software City	Ecosystem Pipeline Project	Ignite Launch 1	Skills and learning	Data available	Data available
Sunderland Software City	Ecosystem Pipeline Project	Ignite Launch 2	Skills and learning	Not applicable	Data available
Sunderland Software City	Ecosystem Pipeline Project	RaiseRight	Skills and learning	Data available	Data available
University of Edinburgh	Venture Builder Incubator	Venture Builder Incubator	Skills and learning	Data available	Data available

Source: Frontier Economics, based on EPP tracker data.

- **Anonymised EDI data:** Self-reported data at the participant level on the following characteristics: belonging to an ethnic minority; female, non-binary individuals, or other non-male genders; LGBTQ+; and those with health conditions.[27]
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess the diversity of the participants and, in particular, to test if the DGG target of reaching at least 35% diverse participants was achieved. It was also used to assess whether the programmes struggled to reach any particular sub-populations (compared to the general distribution of diverse groups in the target population).

Table 28 provides the coverage of this information for each EPP programme.

[27] Health conditions were self-reported in the participant registration questionnaire by responding to the question "Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?" with options including: "A specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia or dyspraxia or AD(H)D"; "Deaf or hearing impairment"; "A long-standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy"; "A physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches"; or "Blind or visual impairment uncorrected by glasses".

Table 28 EDI information coverage by EPP programme modules

Partner	Programme	Module	Gender info	Ethnicity info	Sexuality info	Health info
Allia Impact	EASTECH	Grow Your Business	100%	100%	78%	100%
Allia Impact	EASTECH	Self-Paced Learning	100%	93%	91%	93%
C4DI	BETA Plus Satellites	BETA Plus Satellites	49%	45%	45%	49%
Conception X	Deep Technology Startups	Coaching	94%	90%	26%	77%
Conception X	Deep Technology Startups	Fundraising Support	56%	54%	51%	54%
Conception X	Deep Technology Startups	Mentoring	32%	30%	30%	30%
Conception X	Deep Technology Startups	Regional Workshops	57%	54%	45%	51%
Form Leadership	Liverpool City Region - Tackling the Growth Bottleneck	1-2-1 Advice	100%	92%	50%	50%
Form Leadership	Liverpool City Region - Tackling the Growth Bottleneck	Emerging Leaders Programme	100%	100%	70%	70%
Form Leadership	Liverpool City Region - Tackling the Growth Bottleneck	Growth Workshops	53%	53%	50%	50%
Form Leadership	Liverpool City Region - Tackling the Growth Bottleneck	Shift Programme	100%	100%	93%	93%
Functional Skills	Hidden Talent	Hidden Talent	100%	100%	71%	71%

Partner	Programme	Module	Gender info	Ethnicity info	Sexuality info	Health info
Hartpury University	Tech Box Park	Tech Box Park	95%	95%	95%	95%
Heriot-Watt University	DeepTech LaunchPad	DeepTech LaunchPad	83%	67%	67%	100%
SETsquared	CreativeTech	CreativeTech	68%	68%	68%	63%
SETsquared	Green Futures	Green Futures	86%	79%	86%	79%
Sheffield Hallam University	Digital Wellbeing Accelerator	Digital Wellbeing Accelerator	90%	90%	90%	70%
Sunderland Software City	Ecosystem Pipeline Project	Ignite Accelerator	100%	91%	91%	100%
Sunderland Software City	Ecosystem Pipeline Project	Ignite Launch 1	93%	93%	93%	87%
Sunderland Software City	Ecosystem Pipeline Project	Ignite Launch 2	100%	94%	88%	88%
Sunderland Software City	Ecosystem Pipeline Project	RaiseRight	100%	90%	90%	100%
TheHill	Startup Labs	Startup Labs	100%	100%	100%	100%
Tramsheds	Convergent Content	Convergent Content	100%	100%	92%	88%
Tramsheds	GreenTech Catalyst	GreenTech Catalyst	100%	100%	75%	75%
University of Edinburgh	Venture Builder Incubator	Venture Builder Incubator	84%	84%	84%	89%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.

- **Participants' self-reported location:** location that was self-reported by participants.
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess the EPP's ability to reach the second DGG objective (providing regional support) and whether the DGG target of having more than 80% of business interventions delivered to participants based outside of London was met.
  - **Limitations**: The data was provided per cohort separately without individuals' names or unique identifiers. As such, the total number of participants does not allow for the identification of unique participants, but rather the total number of participants. In addition, some of the EPP programmes included several business interventions, and

these were counted separately each time. For example, Form 1-2-1 advice included three sessions per business, which counted as three separate business interventions. In addition, 158 entries in the FY1 monitoring data did not have information about the participants' locations. As all EPPs were provided to participants outside of London, these are marked 'non-London unspecified' in the analysis and account for the non-London-based overall reach.

Impact assessment approach – Business Accelerator

It was found that an econometric approach was feasible for directly assessing the EPP impacts. In particular, an econometric analysis of the EPPs' impact on participants' employment growth. The econometric approach was similar to that deployed for the impact assessment of the growth programmes (Annex B provides more details).

Skills and learning and Connection and knowledge sharing – impact approach

It was found that an econometric approach was not feasible to assess the direct impacts of EPPs under the 'Skills and learning' and 'Connection and knowledge sharing' categories. EPPs under these two categories have a diverse audience and a range of activities, leading to a vast array of possible economic outcomes.

Of the firms that participated in FY1 in the Skills and learning and Connection and knowledge sharing EPPs, 27% and 78% had CRN numbers, respectively, which are required for identifying pre- and post-employment data, making it difficult to collect employment information. As a result, the evaluation deployed one case study for each of the two categories to assess the impact of programmes.

The case study approach allows the assessment of the outcomes in a qualitative way and helps identify the mechanisms that lead to these impacts. Each case study focused on understanding the delivery of one programme that falls under the category of 'Skills and learning' and one under 'Connection and knowledge sharing'. It involved:

- assessment of monitoring data that was provided to BEL by the delivery partner – this helped assess the outcomes of the programme and compare them to the targets of the DGG
- insights from interviews with the delivery partner and one programme participant (only for the Skills and learning, due to data limitations). This helped assess the benefits of the programme and the mechanisms that led to the impacts

D.4 Process evaluation approach

The process evaluation sought to understand:

- which processes worked well, and which could be improved
- what aspects of the programme delivery assisted in the creation of the observed impact
- what has been learned about how to intervene in this intervention space that can be transferred to other initiatives and future appraisals

The process evaluation was based on insights from interviews with BEL staff close to the EPPs, two EPP delivery partners and one EPP participant.

The interviews included questions about the delivery mode of the DGG, the selection process of the delivery partners and programmes, and how the programmes were delivered to end participants.

D.5 Evaluation analysis

EPP monitoring data analysis

Total reach

Table 29 presents the EPPs' FY1 goals and the achieved numbers of EPP initiatives, as well as the number of business interventions reached and the amount of matched funding raised. The Table also presents the indicative FY2 for these indicators.

Table 29 EPP aim and outcome – FY1 and indicative FY2

	Aim – FY1	Achieved – FY1	Indicative – FY2
EPP initiatives	11	13	12
Business interventions	1,100	1,314	1,200
Funding matched	£1.25 million	£1.43 million	£1.2 million

Source: Frontier Economics' analysis of BEL data.

Table 30 presents the number of modules, participants, and matched funding for each of the FY1 EPPs.

Table 30 Funding information by EPP delivery partner

Delivery partner	Projects	Modules	Matched funding – including VAT (Share of funding)	Total Costs	Business interventions[1]
Allia Impact	1	2	£50,000 (4%) [5]	£50,041	67
C4DI BETA	1	1	£50,000 (4%)	£91,347	55 [2]
Conception X	1	4	£247,000 (17%)	£396,500	869 [3]
Form Leadership	1	4	£61,000 (4%)	£122,000	101 [4]
Functional Skills	1	1	£60,875 (4%) [5]	£122,290	14
Hartpury University	1	1	£73,343 (5%)	£148,963	20
Heriot-Watt University	1	1	£90,000 (6%)	Not Applicable [5]	6
SETsquared	2	2	£118,000 (8%)	£236,000	33
Sheffield Hallam University	1	1	£165,450 (12%)	£324,004	10
Sunderland Software City	3	4	£134,886 (9%) [6]	£274,231	73
TheHill	1	1	£181,870 (13%) [6]	£386,457	10
Tramsheds	2	2	£120,000 (8%) [6]	£208,710	37
University of Edinburgh	1	1	£73,305 (5%)	£198,000	19
Total	**17**	**25**	**£1,425,729**		**1,314**

Source: Frontier Economics, based on BEL data.

Note: (1) Based on BEL monitoring data and following BEL's business intervention definition, where each provided business support interaction is counted separately. (2) 54 participants, according to the Final Tracker EPP tracker; however, BEL mentoring data includes 55 participants. (3) 817 according to the raw data; however, following BEL's definition of business intervention, 52 interventions were added, as per information from BEL that indicated the Conception X coaching programme was provided to 31 participants, but provided a total of 83 interventions. (4) 77 according to the raw data, but following BEL's definition of business intervention, 24 interventions were added as per information from BEL that indicated the Form 1-2-1 support programme was provided to 12 businesses, but each included three coaching sessions. (5) Total cost information was not provided. (6) Matched funding was not explicitly provided but back-calculated.

Diversity of the reach

Table 31 presents the diversity reach of each EPP programme type for each EDI characteristic and the total diversity reach by programme across the delivered business interventions.

Table 31 Diversity reach by EPP type

EPP category	% Female or non-binary	% Ethnic minorities	% LGBTQ+	% with a health condition	Diversity percentage[28]
Business accelerator	30%	15%	8%	11%	51%
Connection and knowledge sharing	34%	9%	15%	9%	59%
Skills and learning	36%	45%	8%	9%	74%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on BEL data.

Table 32 presents the diversity reach of each programme for each EDI characteristic and the total diversity reach, by programme.

Table 32 Diversity reach by EPP partner

Partner	Programme	% Female or non-binary	% Ethnic minorities	% LGBTQ+	% with a health condition	Diversity percentage[29]
Allia Impact	EASTECH	69%	28%	12%	38%	92%
Conception X	Deep Technology Startups	33%	55%	8%	5%	79%
Form Leadership	Liverpool City Region – Tackling the	34%	11%	4%	13%	49%

28 The diversity percentage is calculated as the sum of individuals we define as diverse (female or non-binary; identifying as ethnic minority; identifying as gay; lesbian, bisexual, or other sexuality; with chronic health conditions), divided by the number of individuals who provided EDI information.

29 The diversity percentage is calculated as the sum of individuals we define as diverse (female or non-binary; identifying as ethnic minority; identifying as gay; lesbian, bisexual, or other sexuality; with chronic health conditions), divided by the number of individuals who provided EDI information.

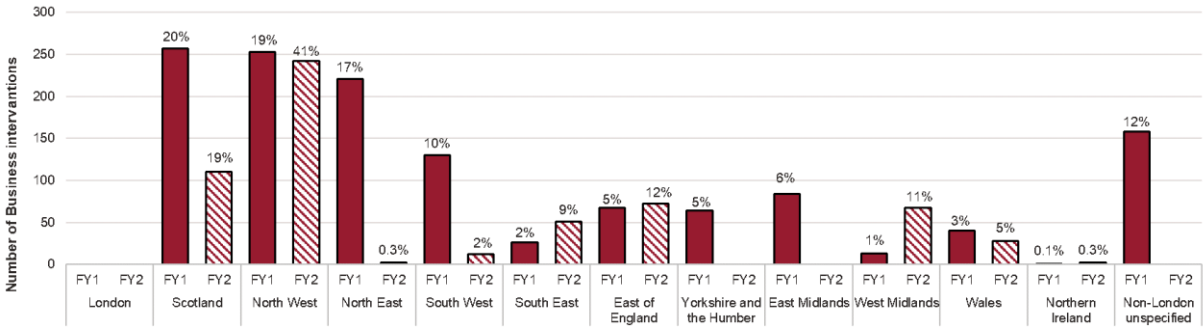
Partner	Programme	% Female or non-binary	% Ethnic minorities	% LGBTQ+	% with a health condition	Diversity percentage[29]
	Growth Bottleneck					
University of Edinburgh	Venture Builder Incubator	19%	19%	6%	0%	31%
Hartpury University	Tech Box Park	21%	21%	0%	5%	47%
Heriot-Watt University	DeepTech LaunchPad	20%	75%	0%	0%	75%
SETsquared	CreativeTech	31%	8%	31%	25%	38%
SETsquared	Green Futures	17%	9%	8%	0%	36%
Sheffield Hallam University	Digital Wellbeing Accelerator	67%	11%	0%	14%	88%
Sunderland Software City	Ecosystem Pipeline Project	29%	30%	6%	6%	53%
Tramsheds	GreenTech Catalyst	25%	17%	0%	11%	55%
C4DI	BETA Plus Satellites	41%	0%	8%	7%	48%
Functional Skills	Hidden Talent	14%	7%	40%	10%	80%
TheHill	Startup Labs	50%	40%	0%	10%	80%
Tramsheds	Convergent Content	32%	8%	17%	9%	52%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.

Regional distribution of the EPP (FY1)

Figure 7, presents the regional reach of the EPPs delivered business interventions in FY1 and FY2.

Figure 7 EPP business interventions by region (FY1 and indicative FY2)



Source: Frontier Economics' analysis of BEL data.
Note: There was regional data for 1,080 participants, of which 659 were Conception X beneficiaries.

The AB interviewed for this evaluation noted that underrepresentation was observed in Northern Ireland during FY1. As a result, a dedicated growth programme (not an EPP) was developed in that region in FY2 (Women in Business NI).

Business Accelerator programmes – impact findings

Impact assessment: Employment Growth analysis

Annex B discusses the employment growth econometric analysis results, which include the programmes in this category.

Overall, the accelerator programmes (including growth programmes) led to an estimated employment growth of 6%.

Skills and learning – Impact assessment case study – Sunderland: Raise Right Programme

The delivery of Sunderland's EPP projects involved a mix of one-to-one support through the Raise Right programme and partnering with Ignite for Accelerator and Launch programmes. We classified Raise Right and Launch as Skills and learning programmes, while Accelerate was classified as a Business accelerator programme.

Raise Right programme focused on mentoring and supporting early-stage tech startups and scaleups, primarily engaging with organisations at different developmental stages in the North East. Raise Right supported businesses and founders through funding rounds.

The case study was based on interviews with Sunderland colleagues and a participant in the Raise Right programme. Insights from the interviews were assessed in light of the programme's monitoring data.

Monitoring data assessment

Based on the programme monitoring report, the evaluation found that the programme:

- had 100% attendance for each activity held
- had 57%[30] of founders who are of protected characteristics
- reached only non-London businesses. In particular, the North East, South West and Scotland
- had an NPS of 63 with an average likelihood for promoting the programme at 9.25 out of 10

From the NPS question, “How likely are you to recommend the Sunderland Software City: Raise Right to a colleague or peer”, participants explained that Raise Right:

- provided practical and meaningful support
- was cooperative and engaged with the needs of startup businesses
- provided an insightful networking experience and good information on funding

Impact findings

Discussions with the Sunderland staff revealed that the programme provided the following benefits:

- **One-to-one support was found to be beneficial.** Raise Right found that engagement with participants through one-to-one mentoring, workshops, and ongoing support was beneficial to participants. They found that the interaction levels were curated to ensure meaningful relationships, provide valuable industry connections, and foster continuous development aligned with the local ecosystem needs. The programme participants felt that the training and environment were very supportive.

- **Access to funding was beneficial.** Raise Right felt that the intended outcomes of the programmes were realised by participants, specifically supporting tech startups and scaleups within the local ecosystems. The flexible approach aided in aligning programme deliverables with regional needs. They felt that participants benefited from increased access to mentors and industry networks, which improved their business strategies and market readiness. The participants agreed and stated that the ‘financial support was … a

30 This is based on the final trackers that the EPP participant provided to BEL. The diversity percentage differs from that calculated by Frontier Economics. The BEL diversity percentage is based on all participants, whereas the Frontier Economics percentage is based on those who provided a response to the diversity question.

very big push', so much so that the participant felt they would have needed to close the business without it.

- **The programme was able to reach the relevant businesses despite challenges.** Sunderland felt that the programme made significant inroads in reaching tech startups and scaleups. They felt that the targeted approach allowed for engagement; however, broader impacts are mildly constrained by issues such as early-stage readiness and varied engagement levels. In particular, they noted differences in outcomes and impacts between startups and scaleups across demographics. They felt that these differences in outcomes were likely due to the varying maturity levels of participating companies. For example, early-stage startups required extensive nurturing and foundational support, unlike more mature scaleups that could integrate advanced offerings more readily. Diverse demographics resulted in varied engagement levels and access to resources, which influenced the impact variation.

- **The programme provided needed regional business support.** Raise Right felt that local needs, which included fostering the tech sector presence, offering strategic guidance, and addressing financial constraints, were met. The programmes were tailored to meet these needs by leveraging existing regional synergies and promoting niche-sector accelerators. The EPP partner felt that for businesses that did not participate in Raise Right, alternative options were scarce and limited to generalised business support, which may not typically be suitable for tech startups.

The discussion revealed the following possible improvements to enhance impact:

- Including additional financial support components and facilitating deeper integration with national and international ecosystems, heightening startups' exposure to critical growth opportunities.
- Addressing specific financial and advanced networking requirements could have further strengthened the realisation of the outcome.

Process evaluation insights

Application of the delivery partner to BEL (including marketing):

- **Marketing to potential delivery partners:** The EPP programme advertisement through BEL's branding and regional promotion strategies was received positively and was indicative of BEL's high regional collaboration.
- **Delivery partner application process:** The application process was reported to be straightforward and conducive to creative programme proposals. The guidelines were clear and allowed for flexibility. The application process encouraged submissions tailored to meet local ecosystem needs rather than conforming to bid requirements. Although Sunderland's views on the process were positive, some improvements were noted. The process could have been streamlined to enhance the user experience in the application

process. They felt that simplifying the initial submission process would have expedited feedback and might have attracted a broader range of proposals.

- **Promotion and marketing to end participants:** The programme was co-promoted with BEL, which Sunderland and Raise Right found to be positive, as it highlighted the partnership with Barclays. This provided assurance to the programme, raising its credibility and attracting a diverse audience.
- **Streamlining the application process can improve delivery:** Simplifying the application process may reduce administrative costs. Additionally, introducing more user-friendly digital application formats might ensure regular feedback to streamline the process. This would lower barriers for potential Raise Right participants, primarily in underserved areas.

Application of the final user to the delivery partner programme (including marketing):

- **Marketing of Raise Right to end participants:** Efforts include a variety of means such as local engagement efforts, word-of-mouth, and cross-promotion with other local organisations (such as Sunderland City Council projects and co-promotion through BEL). Local partnership strategies were found to be most effective in reaching audiences not typically engaged through mainstream channels. Raise Right found that groups outside of established tech centres were harder to reach in the application process. This often required more in-person engagement rather than digital-only outreach. They found that working directly within communities fostered inclusion beyond conventional 'tech-pro' networks, which they found crucial for diversity and broader geographic engagement.

- **End participant applications were straightforward:** Both the participant and Sunderland found the application process to be straightforward. The main issue was that, while the programme focused on PhD students, the greatest barrier was getting supervisors to approve of applications. For example, the interviewee noted that having supervisors who were unfamiliar with AI or uninterested in it was a barrier to getting the application across. They felt that younger supervisors or those interested in the field would make the application process easier.

- **Changes in FY2 to improve reach:** Between FY1 and FY2, Sunderland changed its application process to include outreach strategies targeting specific sub-sectors, in alignment with a shift from a horizontal to a vertical approach. Sunderland believes this will facilitate more personalised support tailored to particular industry needs, appeal to a more defined audience, and reflect ecosystem learning.

Working arrangements between BEL and the delivery partners:

- **BEL was supportive of the delivery partners:** Sunderland and Raise Right found working with BEL favourable, and they found the BEL team supportive and offered guidance without micromanagement. They felt that BEL facilitated the relationship based on trust and oversight, which was provided as needed, but also allowed for freedom in programme implementation.

- **BEL could enhance local impact through cross-regional activities:** Sunderland and Raise Right felt that BEL could enhance coordination by facilitating more cross-regional interactions among tech startups, sharing resources, and promoting peer learning opportunities. These measures would strengthen the ecosystem as a whole by promoting collaboration beyond local geographies.
- **BEL would reduce the administrative burden:** BEL might be less 'paper-heavy' and more flexible, thereby reducing the administrative burden on EPP partners. This would have allowed EPP partners to focus on delivering impactful programmes. However, more proactive mentoring and strategic collaboration would have also enhanced the outcomes of these partnerships.

Connection and knowledge sharing – Impact assessment case study – Transhedtech: Convergent Content programme

According to BEL, the delivery of Tramshed Tech's Convergent Content programme aimed to work with the "[d]igital [t]echnology sector to identify new content production models, utilising innovative technology platforms to engage with new audiences for content and expand the reach and distribution of content to existing audiences."[31]

The case study was based on interviews with Tramshed Tech colleagues who were closely involved in the delivery of the Convergent Content programme. Insights from the interviews were assessed in light of the programme's monitoring data.

Monitoring data assessment

Based on the programme monitoring report, the evaluation found that:

- the programme had 92% attendance across the activities held
- the programme had 50%[32] of founders be of protected characteristics
- 100% of the support was focused on non-London businesses
- the programme had an NPS of 75, with an average likelihood of promoting the programme at 9.75 out of 10
- from the NPS question, "How likely are you to recommend the Tramshed: Convergent Content Programme to a colleague or peer?", participants explained that Convergent Content:
  - allowed participants to connect with other creative businesses in Wales, rather than having to go to larger cities in the UK, like London. Sessions and talks were insightful and interesting, and also offered invaluable networking opportunities

31 Tramshed Tech, Partner Tracker EPP1 – Final, tab 'KPI'. Source: data received from BEL

32 This is based on the final trackers the EPP participant provided to BEL. The diversity percentage differs from that calculated by Frontier Economics. The BEL diversity percentage is based on all participants, whereas the Frontier Economics percentage is based on those who provided a response to the diversity question.

- bridged networking between South and North Wales

Impact findings

Discussions with the Tramshed Tech staff revealed that the programme provided the following benefits:

- **Networking and mentorship were found to be beneficial:** Convergent Content found that engagement with participants through one-to-one mentoring, workshops and ongoing support was beneficial to participants. They found that participants benefited from increased access to mentors and industry networks, which improved their business strategies and market readiness.
- **Localised support:** Convergent Content felt that the intended outcomes of the programmes were realised by participants, specifically by enhancing accessibility. The flexible approach (for example, hybrid delivery) effectively aided in aligning programme deliverables with regional needs. They felt that the localised and hybrid-delivery programmes enhanced accessibility, allowing for tailored mentorships and broadening of professional networks.
- **Possible improvement to enhance impact:** To enhance the benefits, future programmes could include additional financial support components, facilitate deeper integration with national and international ecosystems, and heighten startups' exposure to critical growth opportunities.
- **The programme was able to reach the relevant businesses despite challenges:** Tramshed Tech felt that the programme successfully reached its target tech startups and scaleups across Wales, including traditionally under-connected areas like North Wales. Tramshed Tech felt that engagement varied by programme type. Convergent Content had looser, event-focused participation over five months, allowing flexibility in engagement levels with high final attendance rates. They also felt that the programme effectively addressed participants' needs by linking technology startups with creative industries, fostering a throughway for collaborative projects that were unforeseen prior. The feedback underscores that programmes filled critical ecosystem gaps, highlighting tailored scopes aligning with the startups' evolving needs. Additionally, the programmes' initiatives substantially achieved the intended outcomes by realising cross-regional connections within Wales and nationally, facilitating startup growth networks, and cementing valuable support structures, enhancing sustainable business evolution within the local tech ecosystem. Scaleups primarily saw advantages through enhanced investor readiness and extended networks, which aided growth. In contrast, startups, particularly those in nascent tech hubs, valued foundational network and resource access, as well as leveraging partnerships crucial for initial-stage growth and development timelines.
- **The programme provided needed regional business support:** Tramshed Tech felt that, due to population density, areas outside South Wales were initially harder to reach. Strategic partnerships with organisations in North Wales, coupled with local engagement events, helped extend the reach. Continued expansion of these partnerships and deepening local collaborations could further enhance inclusion for geographically

disparate demographics. Tramshed Tech felt that building on existing grassroots networks has proven effective in regional outreach. Enhanced targeted advertising, tailored community engagement strategies, and leveraging local influencers could optimise future outreach efforts, addressing remaining geographic and demographic challenges more comprehensively.

Process insights

Application of the delivery partner to BEL (including marketing)

- **Marketing to potential delivery partners:** Tramshed Tech mentioned that the EPP opportunity was advertised through launch events held across the UK, including Wales. Tramshed Tech found the communication about the programmes was clear, ensuring potential delivery partners understood the parameters for participation and application submission.
- **Delivery partner application process:** Tramshed Tech found the application to BEL to be detailed and comprehensive as it required information, including diagrams for the project and proposals. However, they found the web-based form difficult to complete in one sitting, but still felt that the process was clear and structured. They also found that the information sessions provided by BEL clarified procedural elements, ensuring that organisations from different regions and sectors could effectively align with funding and project goals. Tramshed Tech felt that the application process to BEL could have been improved. In particular, BEL could have improved the administrative burden and created a more user-friendly submission form (for example, by allowing users to save and return to options). Furthermore, they felt that securing matched funding had a tight deadline. This indicates that BEL could have been more flexible and extended deadlines to facilitate strategic partner discussions in matching funding scenarios.
- **Promotion and marketing to end participants:** Tramshed Tech noted that recipients began with an application form assessing their relevance based on sector, stage, and regional suitability. After initial scrutiny, interviews ensured alignment. Diversity metrics were considered, followed by due diligence checks, which led to a formal onboarding process complete with programme orientations and expectations briefs.

Application of the final user to the delivery partner programme (including marketing)

- **Marketing of Convergent Tech to end participants:** Tramshed Tech felt that, due to population density, areas outside South Wales were initially harder to reach. Strategic partnerships with organisations in North Wales, coupled with local engagement events, helped extend the reach. Continued expansion of these partnerships and deepening local collaborations could further enhance inclusion for geographically disparate demographics. Tramshed Tech also noted that building on existing grassroots networks has proven effective in regional outreach. Enhanced targeted advertising, tailored community engagement strategies, and leveraging local influencers could optimise future outreach efforts, addressing remaining geographic and demographic challenges more comprehensively.

- **Changes in FY2 to improve reach:** Tramshed Tech felt that their advertising changes between FY1 and FY2 to final programme users were scant. The consistent core still involved utilising robust networks, strategic marketing collaborations with BEL, and adaptive learning from past programme periods to refine outreach and delivery efficiency.

Working arrangements between BEL and the delivery partners

- **BEL were supportive of the delivery partners:** Tramshed Tech felt that working with BEL was positive. In particular, they noted that BEL was responsive and provided consistent support throughout the project phases. They felt that the BEL team was engaged, provided timely responses to queries and enabled smooth transitions from inception to mobilisation of projects. They also felt that BEL's strategic support helped align projects with border UK-wide initiatives.
- **BEL can enhance local impact with cross-regional activities:** Tramshed Tech felt that BEL could further enhance integration and collaboration in regional networks beyond the existing communication channels. They felt that, while the current mechanisms were effective, fostering ongoing and proactive engagements could enhance readiness and adaptability for emergent challenges or opportunities.

Process evaluation insights – EPP overarching

The EPP selection process included a wide outreach to potential delivery partners in the ecosystem and allowed for a diverse portfolio of tailored programmes:

- The EPP selection was based on a public application process advertised through BEL's network and online channels. Interested partners applied for match funding, where they are required to submit an online form accompanied by a support pack detailing their project's vision, activities, outcomes, and required finances. Interviewed BEL staff reported that this process led to 80 applications for FY1 EPPs, reflecting the variety and diversity of potential EPP partners.
- The formal application required applicants to provide details about their proposed programmes. However, BEL allowed flexibility in programme designs and mainly asked for programmes to achieve the four DGG objectives rather than providing other guidelines. Interviewed EPP delivery partners reflected that this approach allowed them to design the most suitable and high-quality programmes.

The EPP were selected for one year only:

- Unlike the Growth programmes, EPPs were constructed for one year at a time. This meant that BEL could change the EPP programmes that would be delivered in FY2. Indeed, in FY2, only three of the FY1 delivery partners were selected to deliver EPPs again.
- Delivery partners also reflected that the annual application process allowed them to adjust their programmes in light of learning from FY1. However, they also reflected that an annual process increases the administrative burden and does not allow for longer-term project designs.

The AB was highly involved in the selection and monitoring of the EPPs:

- The AB was highly involved in the selection of the EPPs. After BEL shortlisted the delivery partners' applications, the AB members were provided with details of the applications. The AB was then asked to grade the programmes by their quality. The interviewed AB members reflected that the information was sufficient to grade the programme while being respectful of their time. BEL then used those grades to select the highest-ranked programmes while ensuring a good balance across the regions. As such, the AB members reflected that it might be that the portfolio did not include the programmes with the highest quality ranking. For example, if all the highest-ranking programmes are based in one region, BEL had to take lower-ranking ones to support a variety of regions. Overall, AB members agreed that this process ensured the quality and spread of regional support.
- The AB was also provided with monitoring data across the year to ensure the delivery of the EPPs fulfils the DGG objectives.

Annex E – Mentoring analysis

E.1 Activity description

The mentoring programme was delivered by BEL through three delivery partners. It focused on underrepresented founders, particularly those outside of London and underrepresented groups who might not have access to the same levels of support. The overarching ambition is to include at least 35% of diverse participants who are based outside of London.

The original aim of the programme was to deliver 750 hours of mentoring in FY1, funded by the DGG, which would be matched by an additional 750 hours from Barclays, resulting in a total of 1500 hours. However, due to increased demand, 500 additional (250 funded and 250 matched) were added. Therefore, approximately 2,000 hours were recorded in the first financial year.

In FY2, the programme was intended to deliver an additional 750 hours of mentoring. Later on, an additional 250 hours were added to the mentoring programme. Lastly, in FY2, 150 mentoring hours were added as part of the scaleup mentoring programmes. Since the added hours were delivered in parallel to this evaluation, they were excluded from this evaluation.

The programme was delivered through three delivery partners: Cambridge Judge Business School, Capital Enterprise and Codebase. These were companies which were already providing mentoring programmes and worked with BEL. The key criterion for selecting the partners was having experience in supporting businesses with access to capital, markets, and talent. Previous successful collaborations with these partners, along with a proven track record of providing adequate service and quick mobilisation, also informed their selection.

Mentees could self-select into the programme. They accessed information on possible mentors on the programme's webpage, including expert tags and a self-curated brief biography. Mentees needed to fill out a short application and select mentors. Thereafter, BEL used soft criteria to assess the mentor-mentee match and introduced the mentee to the mentoring partner. Initial requests were for a one-hour mentoring session. However, there is no limit to the number of sessions a mentee may have subsequently. Mentees could request repeat sessions with the same mentor or request other mentors as needed. Sessions were held virtually.

E.2 Logic model

A logic model is a visual representation of the innervation's Theory of Change. Table 33 summarises the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and short- and long-term impacts of the mentoring programme that this evaluation aimed to assess.

Table 33 Logic model

Component	Sub-component	Description
Input	Programme administration funding	BEL staff time for selection of delivery partners, monitoring, marketing, and overall programme management.
Funding provided to local delivery partners	Operational costs	Funding for staff costs, marketing, and overheads.
Funding provided to local delivery partners	Expertise	Mentorship and coaching, including from industry experts, academics, and consultants.
Funding provided to local delivery partners	Digital platform	Digital delivery platforms for online sessions and providing resources.
Activities	Mentorship & coaching	One-on-one guidance from sector experts, helping participants refine business strategies and build competencies.
Activities	Signposting of other DGG-funded activities	Raising participants' awareness of other DGG-funded activities beyond the programme in which they participate.
Outputs	Number of participants	Total count of individuals and businesses engaged across the programmes (including demographic data).
Outputs	Hours of training or learning	Total hours spent in training, workshops, mentoring, and other support activities.
Outputs	Connections established	Number of new connections formed between participants and mentors, peers, investors, or industry partners.
Outputs	User satisfaction	Participant feedback regarding the relevance, quality and effectiveness of the programme activities.
Outcomes	Improved skills and confidence	Participants gain enhanced skills and confidence in areas such as R&D, entrepreneurship, business management, digital marketing, pitching, and presenting.
Outcomes	Enhanced sector awareness	Participants develop a deeper understanding of sector-specific challenges and opportunities.
Outcomes	Improved funding readiness	Better access to capital and funding opportunities through grants, investments, and partnerships.
Outcomes	Expanded networks	Increased size and diversity of companies' industry networks.

Component	Sub-component	Description
Short- and mid-term impacts	Stronger tech ecosystems	Enhanced innovation and collaboration within local tech communities.
Short- and mid-term impacts	More diverse tech sector	Increased diversity and inclusion, with greater participation from underrepresented groups and businesses outside established tech hubs.
Short- and mid-term impacts	Improved commercialisation	Businesses become more investable and better positioned to attract funding and scale their operations.
Short- and mid-term impacts	Increased funding	Higher level of funding for UK startups and scaleups.
Long-term impacts	Economic growth	Economic benefits like local employment, GDP growth, and bolstered regional tech clusters.

Source: Frontier Economics' analysis of BEL data.

E.3 Impact evaluation approach

An impact evaluation aims to assess if, to what extent, and how the anticipated impacts identified in the logic model were created by the programme.

The evaluation utilised monitoring data provided by BEL on mentoring sessions for FY1 and FY2. FY2 data is correct as of February 2025, and the additional mentoring hours that were added later in FY2 were excluded. Analysis of the mentoring data helped assess the outputs of the activity and the ability to achieve the four DGG objectives.

To further explore the impacts of the mentoring programme, the evaluation deployed a survey of the mentoring programme participants.

Monitoring data

BEL provided the following monitoring information for the mentoring programme:

- **Session level data**: For each mentoring session, the data included the delivery partner, the name of the participants' business, and self-reported industry.
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess the number of business interventions (in this case, the number of mentoring sessions) delivered across FY1 and FY2 (indicative), as defined by BEL (the number of times a business support activity was provided). This information was used to assess the EPPs' ability to achieve the first DGG objective, to test if the DGG objective of reaching 16,000 businesses was achieved (in conjunction with the other programmes' reach) and to assess the reach compared to the target population.
  - **Limitations**: The data was provided per session without individuals' names or unique identifiers. As such, the analysis could not identify the number of unique participants

but rather the number of sessions and the number of unique businesses that were reached. It is likely that the same individual participated in more than one programme. It is also likely that there are instances where several individuals from the same firms participate in different programmes.

- **NPS data:** Provided on an instance level (entry per session attendance and for each NPS response). NPSs were analysed for the FY1 programme only.
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess users' satisfaction with the programme. A high NPS can indicate participants' satisfaction.
  - **Limitations**: Not all participants reported NPS data.
- **Mentee diversity flag:** Anonymised information on FY1 mentee diversity.
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess the diversity of the participants and, in particular, to test if the DGG target of reaching at least 35% diverse participants was achieved. The FY1 diversity data that BEL shared with the evaluation team did not include a flag for individual EDI characteristics. As such, it was not possible to assess the mentoring programme's ability to reach particular sub-populations.
- **Participants' self-reported location:** location that was self reported by participants.
  - **Use of data**: This data was used to assess the mentoring prgramme's ability to reach the second DGG objective (providing regional support) and whether the DGG target of having more than 80% of business interventions delivered to participants based outside of London was met.

Survey of the Mentoring Programme Participants

To assess the impacts of the mentoring programme in more detail, a 20-question survey was administered to participants (FY1 and FY2) in the mentoring programme. The questionnaire was approved by the DSIT and sent to all mentoring participants through BEL. The survey was also used for the process evaluation.

Within the 20 questions, the following were questions relevant to the impact assessment:

- Question 4: How satisfied were you with your mentoring session(s)?
- Question 5: Did your mentor understand your business and provide you with guidance that met your needs?
- Question 6: Did your mentor help you identify and connect with existing initiatives in the private or public sectors that provide support for startups and scaleups?
- Question 7: What benefits did you gain from participating in the mentoring programme?
- Question 8: If your business is based outside of London, did your mentor help you address growth challenges in a way that suited your local environment?
- Question 9: If you had not participated in Barclays Eagle Labs' mentoring programme, how likely is it that you would have found similar advice or guidance elsewhere?
- Question 10: If this mentoring support was being provided for a fee, how much would you be willing to pay (in £ per hour)?

Comparability of the survey sample and the overall mentee cohort

For the impact evaluation, it was possible to examine only survey responses from a sample of participants. The survey was sent to all FY1 and FY2 participants, and 101 participants replied; these constituted the survey sample.

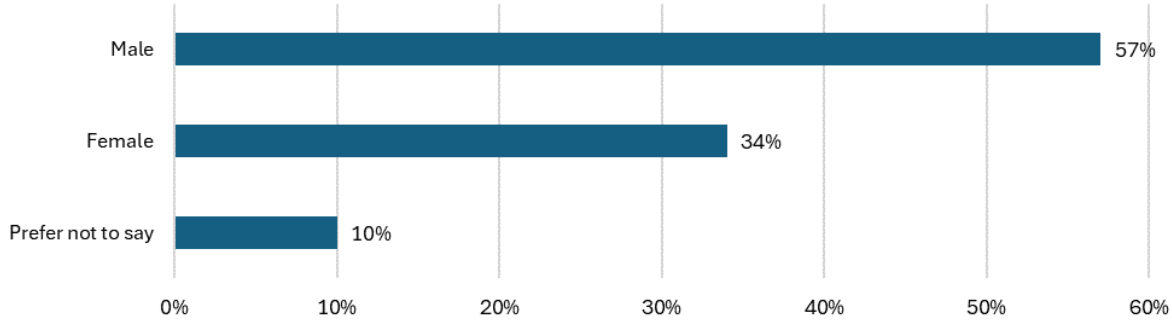
It is pertinent to understand to what degree the sample is representative of the overall population that participated in the programme. The analysis compared distributions of some characteristics between the sample data and the monitoring data. The results showed that:

- the survey sample (101 respondents) represented 11% of the total population for FY1 and FY2(892 unique businesses).
- non-Londoners represent about 70% of the participants in both the sample and the population (representation of other regions is similar)
- both the sample and the total population have 60% diverse business owners, those fulfilling either of these conditions: females, non-white, LGBTQ+, or with health issues.

As such, the sample seems to be representative of the total population.

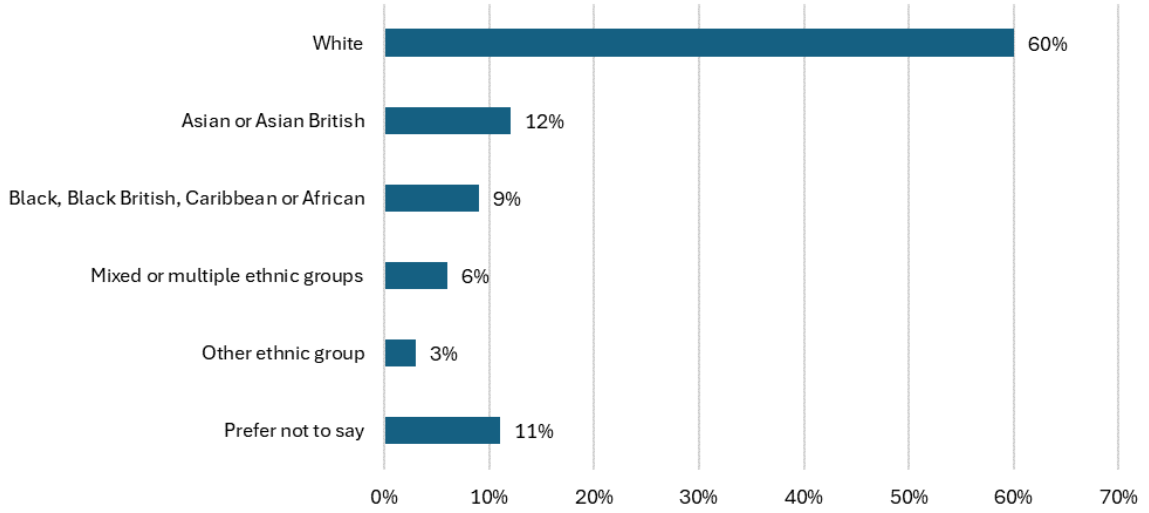
Survey respondents' personal characteristics from the survey

Figure 8 Gender



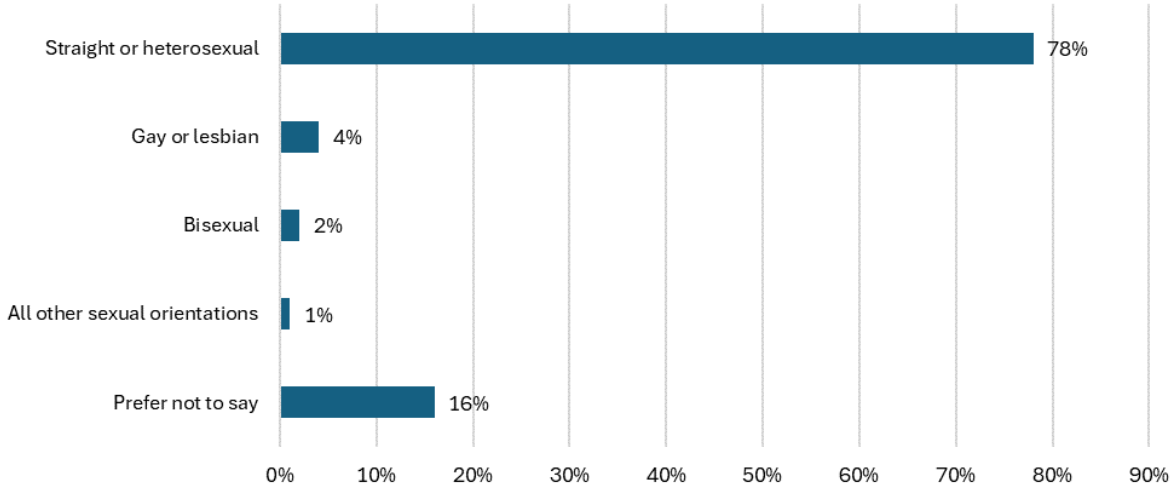
Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 9 Ethnic group



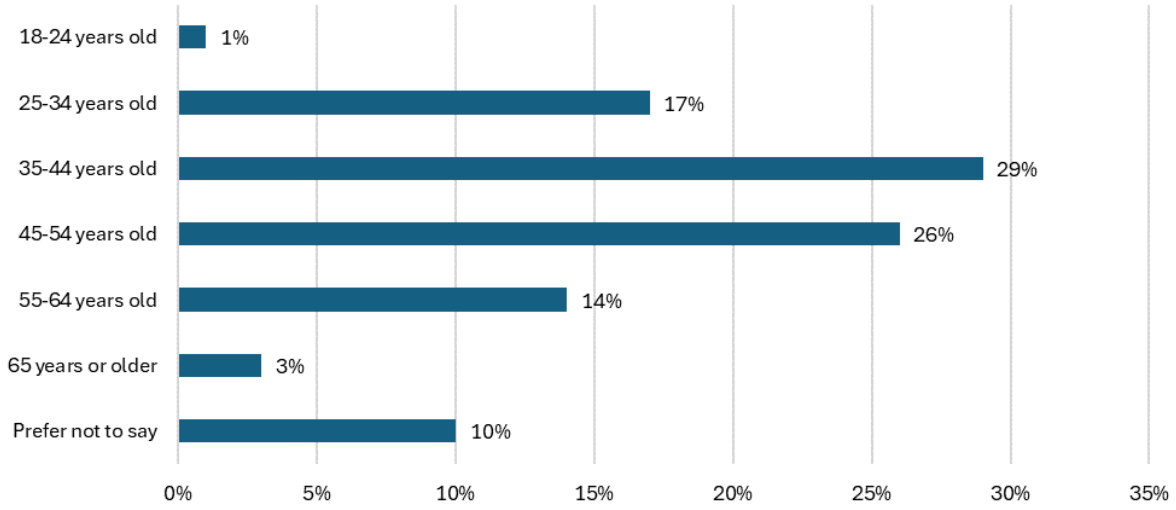
Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 10 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?



Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

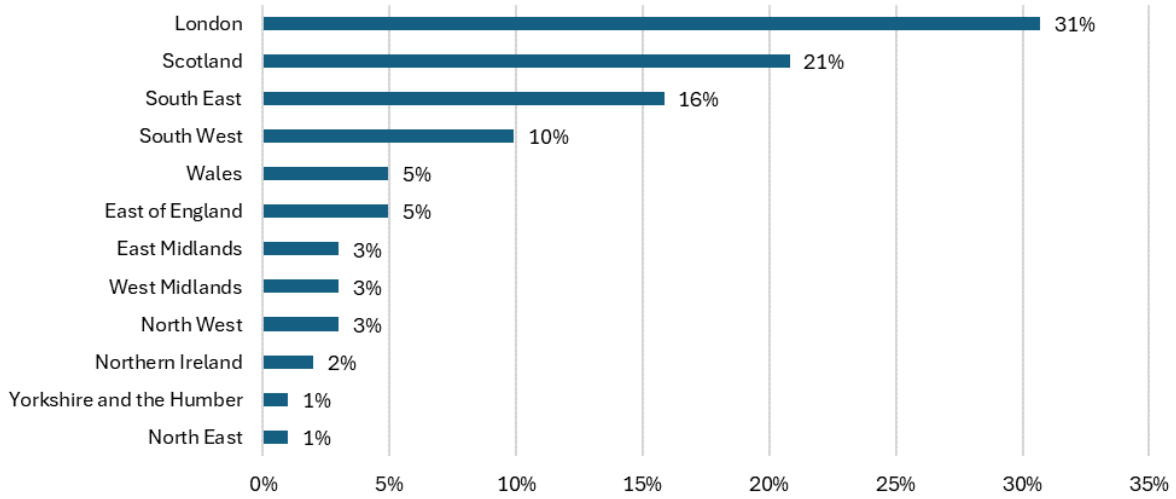
Figure 11 Age of respondents



Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

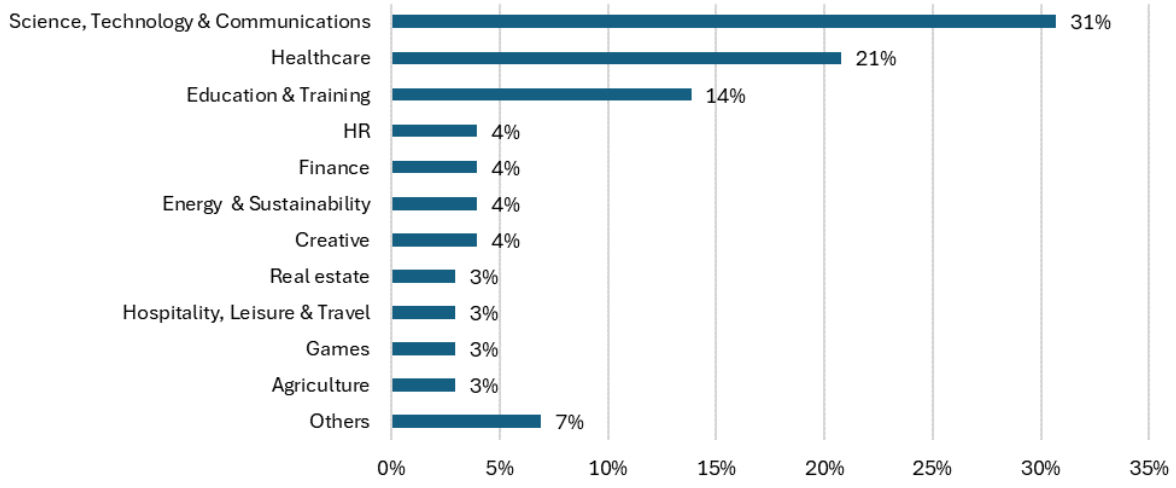
Survey respondents' business characteristics

Figure 12 Business location



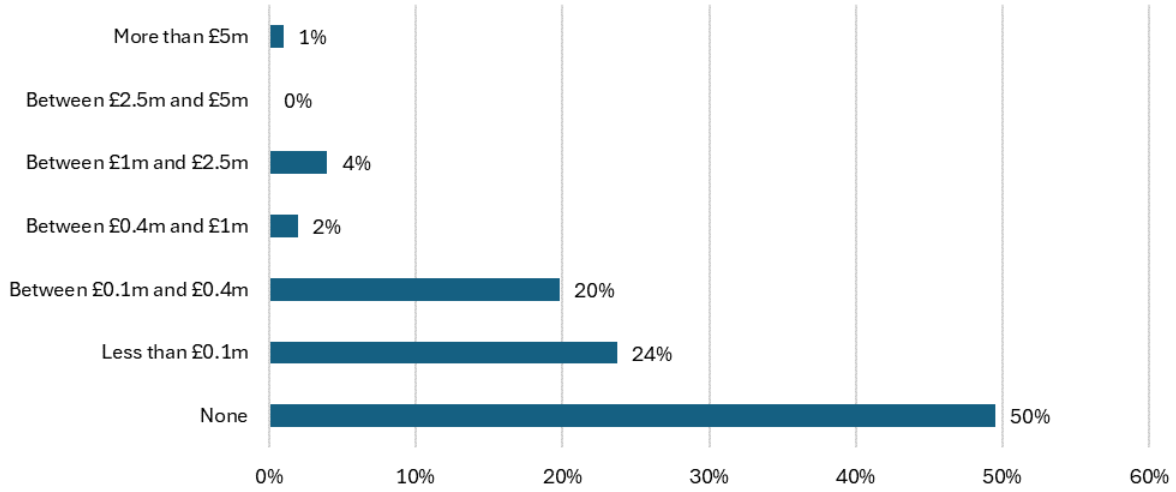
Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 13 Which industry does your business operate in



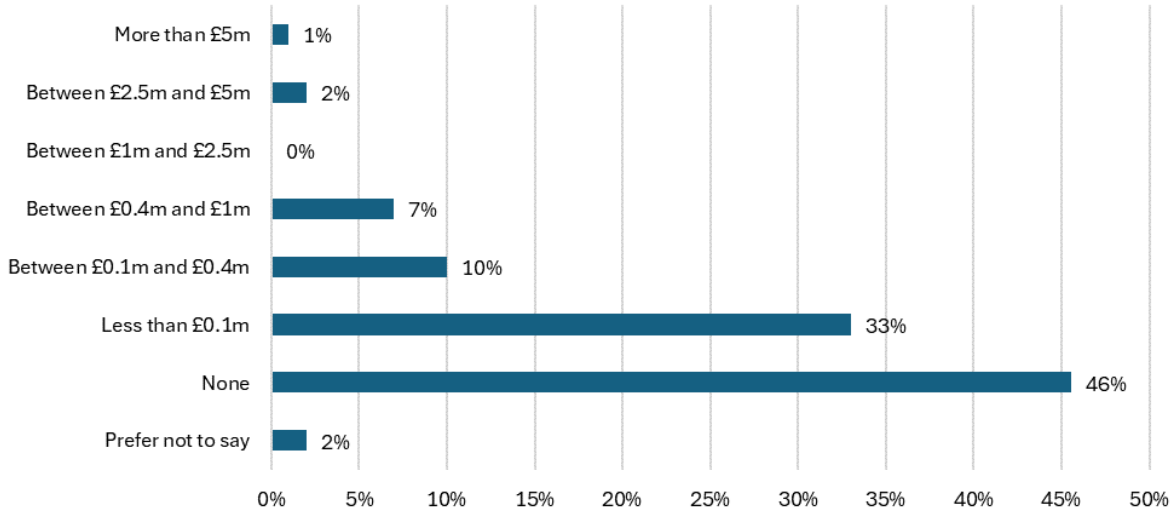
Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 14 How much funding had your business raised at the time you attended the mentoring programme (for example, through grants or from investors)?



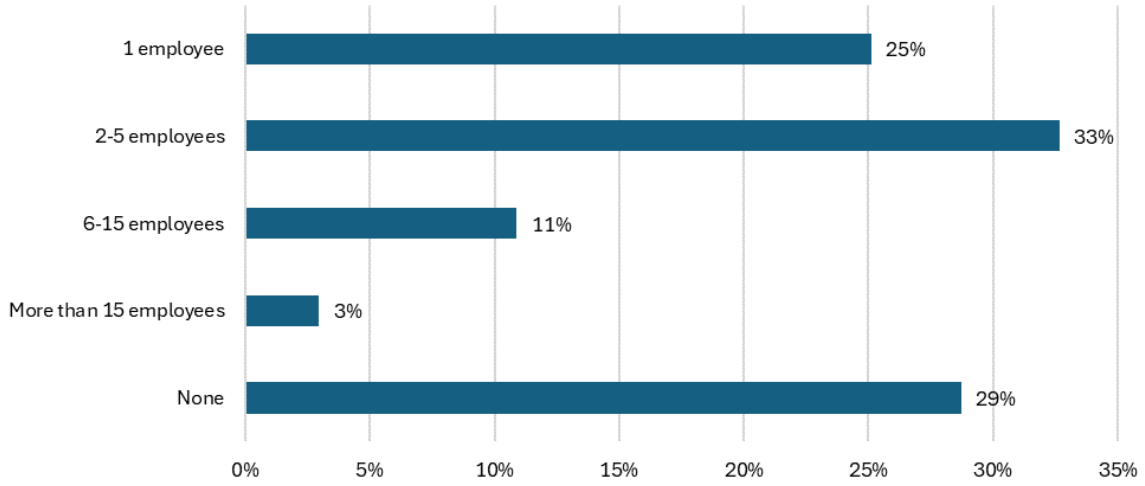
Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 15 How much revenue was your business generating (per annum) at the time you attended the mentoring programme?



Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 16 How many (full-time equivalent) people did your business employ at the time you attended the mentoring programme?



Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

E.4 Process evaluation approach

The process evaluation was based on results from the survey questions and insights from an interview with a BEL colleague closely involved in the delivery of the programme.

The survey questions, relevant to the process evaluation, were:

- Question 1: How would you rate the ease of the application process?
- Question 2: Did you get paired with one of your preferred mentors?
- Question 3: How many mentoring sessions did you attend in total?
- Question 11: Do you have any suggestions/recommendations for how the mentoring programme could be improved in the future?
- Question 12: How did you first hear about Barclays Eagle Labs' mentoring programme?

E.5 Evaluation findings

Mentoring monitoring data analysis

Total reach

The monitoring data was used to assess the following reach indications:

- **Total sessions**: The total sessions reported in each FY were obtained by summing up all individual sessions. This is the number used to assess the overall reach of the monitoring programme.

- **Total hours:** The total number of mentoring hours associated with each session. Note that not all sessions are an hour long, which means the total number of sessions may not correspond with the total number of hours.
- **Total mentees (unique businesses):** The number of unique business names.
- **Average session-mentees ratio (businesses):** The ratio of total sessions to the number of mentees, which indicates the average number of sessions that were attended by the participants.

Table 34 presents the mentoring programme FY1 and FY2 (indicative) total number of sessions, hours, number of mentees (unique business names), average number of sessions per mentee, and the percentage of diverse mentees.

Table 34 Distribution of sessions and mentees, by financial years

	Total sessions	Total hours	Number of mentees	Average session per mentee	Diverse (%)
FY1	765	750	447	1.7	52%
FY2*	754	750	445	1.7	71%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL

*Note: *FY2 data is indicative as the evaluation was undertaken while FY2 activities were taking place. An additional 250 mentoring hours were deployed in FY2 but did not appear in the received records as they were deployed later, while the evaluation was already underway. An additional 150 mentoring hours were delivered in FY2 as part of the scaleup mentoring programmes and were excluded from this evaluation.*

Please note that another 250 mentoring hours (beyond the 750) were approved for delivery in FY2, and 150 additional mentoring hours were provided as part of the scaleup mentoring programme in FY2. However, monitoring data on these sessions was not available, as the evaluation was taking place while they were being delivered.

Table 35 shows the distribution of the number of sessions per mentee (per business name) availed in FY1 and FY2. This was estimated by adding the total number of sessions attended by each individual business.

Table 35 Frequency of sessions – FY1 and FY2

Number of sessions	Count (FY1)	% mentees (FY1)	Count (FY2)	% mentees (FY2)
1	277	62.0%	296	66.5%
2	104	23.3%	80	18.0%
3	42	9.4%	32	7.2%
4	11	2.5%	18	4.0%
5	4	0.9%	9	2.0%
6	3	0.7%	4	0.9%
7	Not applicable	Not applicable	3	0.7%
8	Not applicable	Not applicable	1	0.2%
9	1	0.2%	Not applicable	Not applicable
≥10	5	1.1%	2	0.4%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.
Note: No values in the table for a specific number of sessions imply that no mentee attended this number of sessions.

Diversity of reach

In FY1, the data indicated that 52% of the mentees came from diverse backgrounds.

Regional reach

Table 36 and Table 37 present the regional distribution of FY1 and FY2 mentees, along with key statistics. Those were calculated based on the self-reported location per session. In addition, the evaluation estimated the average number of sessions each mentee (unique business).

Table 36 Distribution of sessions and mentees, by business location – FY1

Business location	Total sessions	Total hours	Number of mentees	Average sessions per mentee	% of hours (750 total hours)
London	198	191	122	1.6	25%
Scotland	139	138	88	1.6	18%
South East	77	74	54	1.4	10%
North West	79	78.5	42	1.9	10%
West Midlands	61	62	40	1.5	8%
South West	36	34.5	24	1.5	5%
East of England	40	39	20	2.0	5%
Yorkshire and the Humber	27	27	19	1.4	4%
North East	53	53	14	3.8	7%
Wales	33	32	14	2.4	4%
East Midlands	19	18	12	1.6	2%
Northern Ireland	3	3	3	1.0	0%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.
Note: Business location is reported in the data.

Table 37 Distribution of sessions and mentees, by business location – FY2

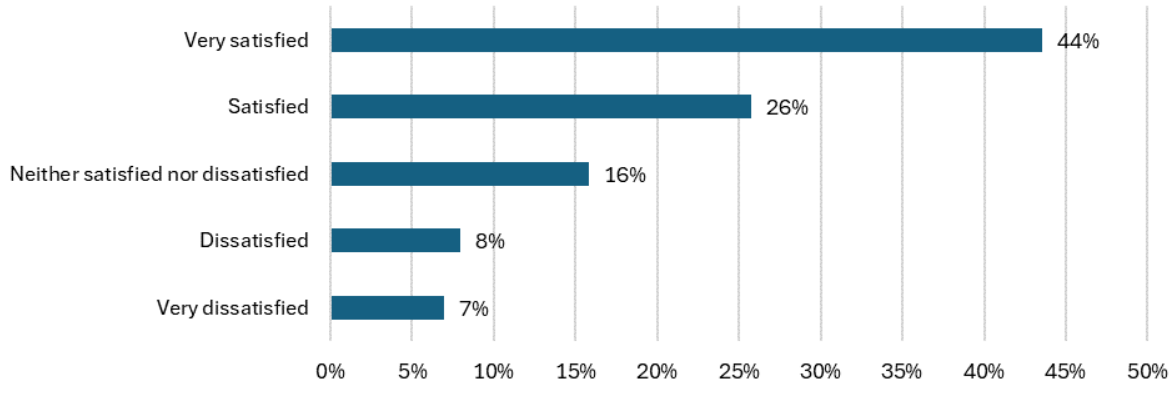
Business location	Total sessions	Total hours	Number of mentees	Average session per mentee	% of hours (750 total hours)
London	237	235.5	134	1.8	32%
Scotland	110	109.5	84	1.3	15%
South East	102	102	58	1.8	14%
North West	51	51	33	1.5	7%
South West	43	42.5	29	1.5	6%
West Midlands	40	39.5	22	1.8	5%
North East	57	57	19	3.0	8%
Yorkshire and the Humber	24	24	17	1.4	3%
East of England	22	21.5	15	1.5	3%
East Midlands	25	24.5	12	2.1	3%
Wales	22	22	12	1.8	3%
Northern Ireland	17	17	8	2.1	2%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.
Note: Business location is reported in the data.

Impact findings: Survey findings

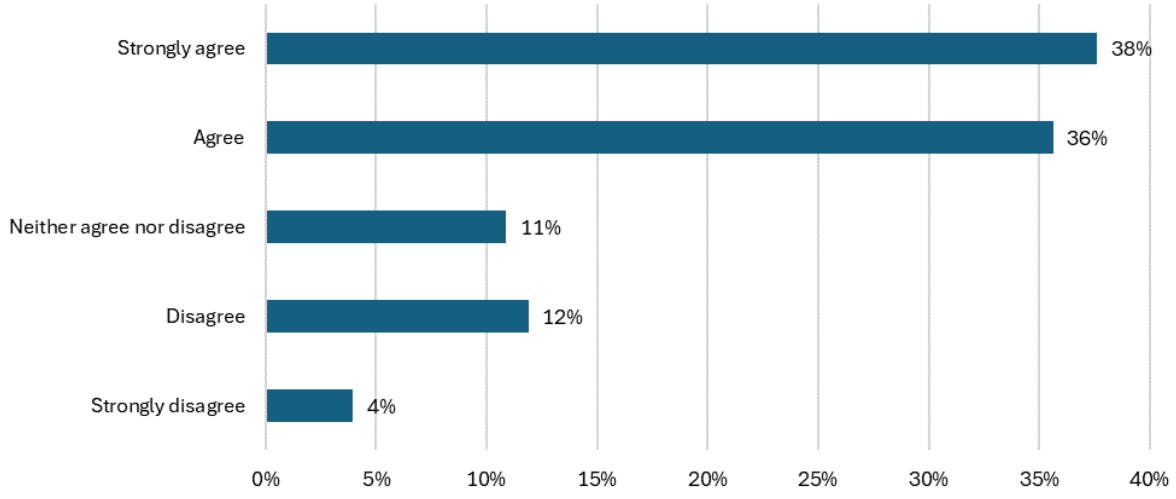
The following figures (Figure 17 to Figure 23) present the survey question results that were relevant to the impact evaluation.

Figure 17 How satisfied were you with your mentoring session(s)?



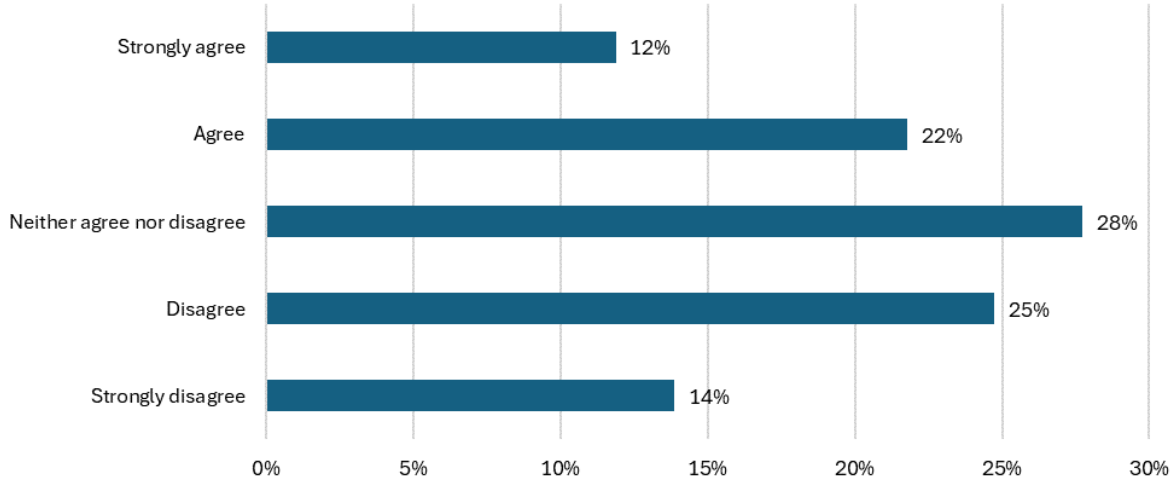
Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 18 Did your mentor understand your business and provide you with guidance that met your needs?



Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 19 Did your mentor help you identify and connect with existing initiatives in the private or public sectors that provide support for startups and scaleups?

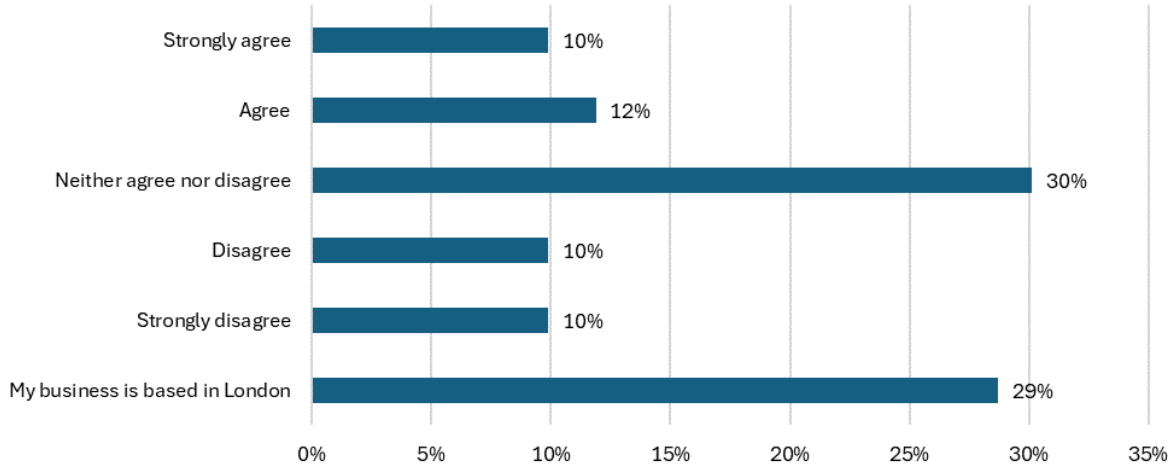


Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 20 What benefits did you gain from participating in the mentoring programme?

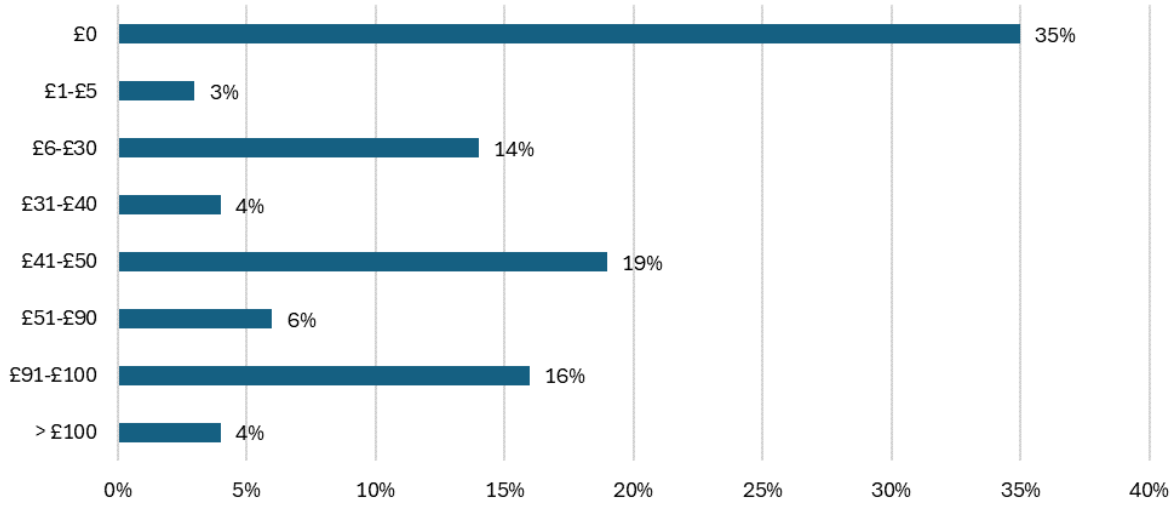
Source: Frontier Economics based on Mentoring survey data.
Note: The percentages do not add up to a 100% because respondents could cite multiple benefits.

Figure 21 If your business is based outside of London, did your mentor help you address growth challenges in a way that suited your local environment?



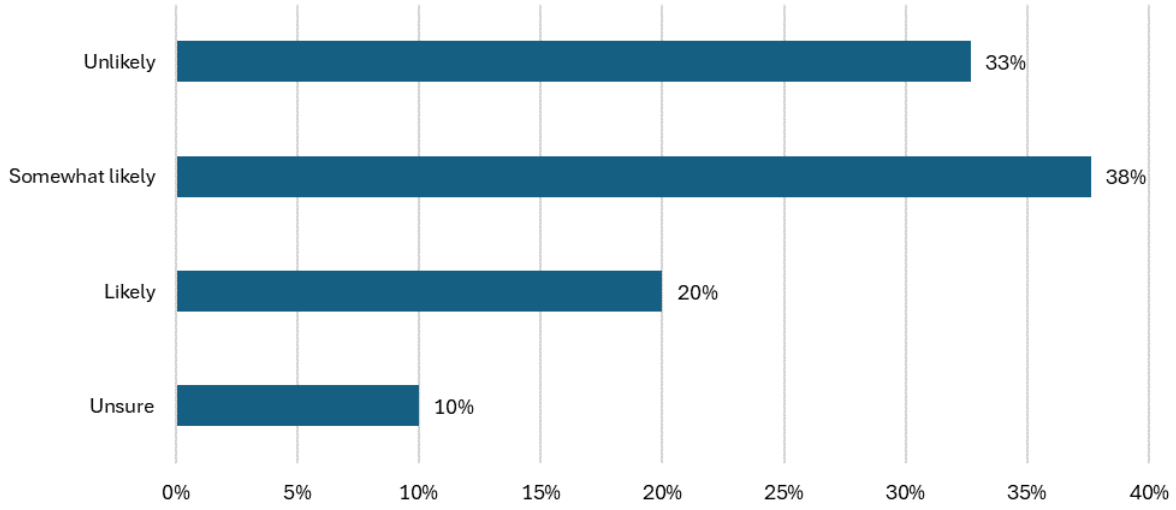
Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 22 If this mentoring support was being provided for a fee, how much would you be willing to pay (in £ per hour)?



Source: Frontier Economics, based on survey data.

Figure 23 If you had not participated in Barclays Eagle Labs' mentoring programme, how likely is it that you would have found similar advice or guidance elsewhere?

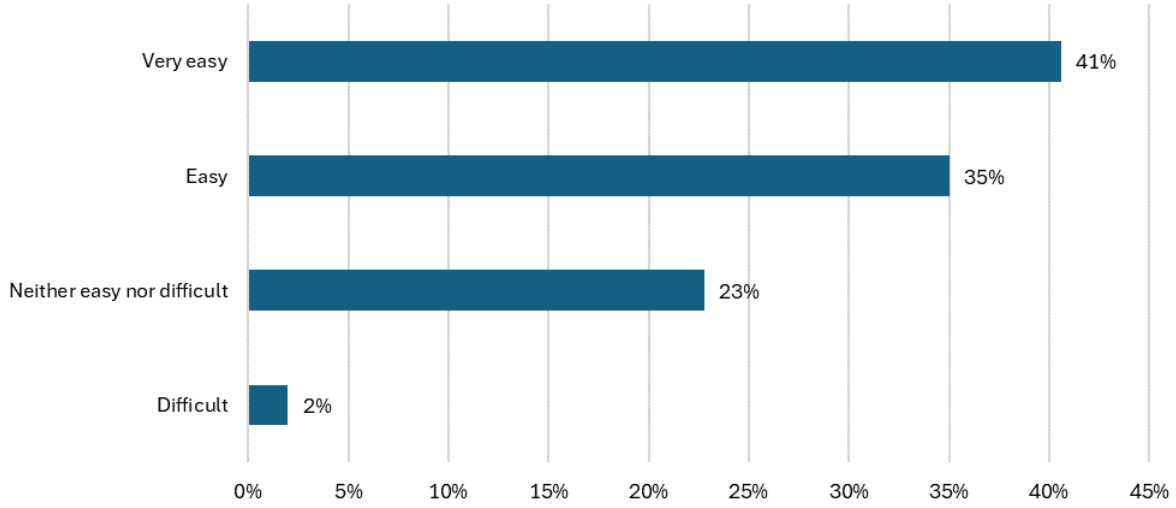


Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Process evaluation insights

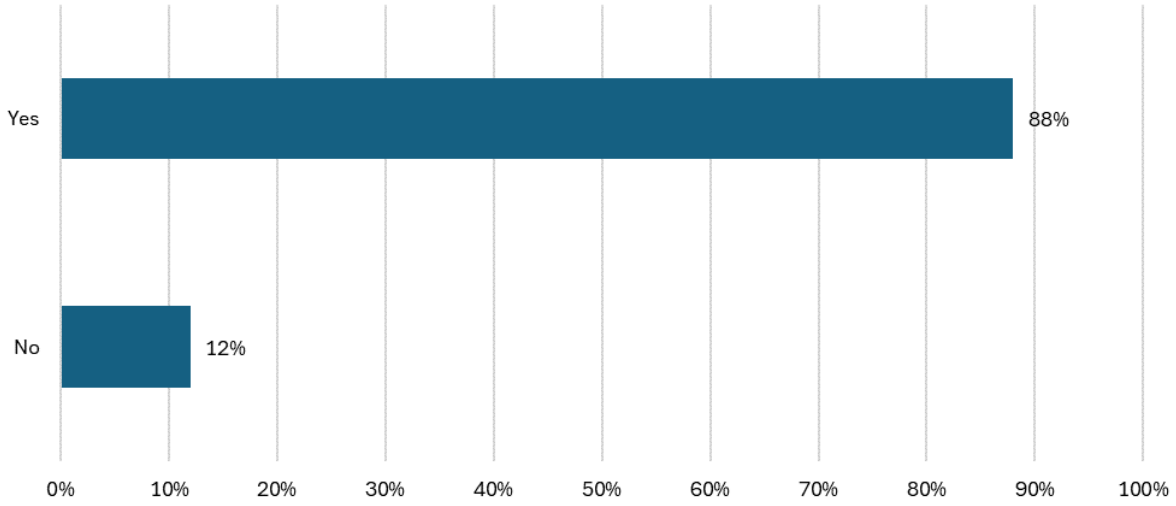
The following figures (Figure 24 to Figure 26) present the responses to the survey questions relevant to the process evaluation.

Figure 24 How would you rate the ease of the application process?



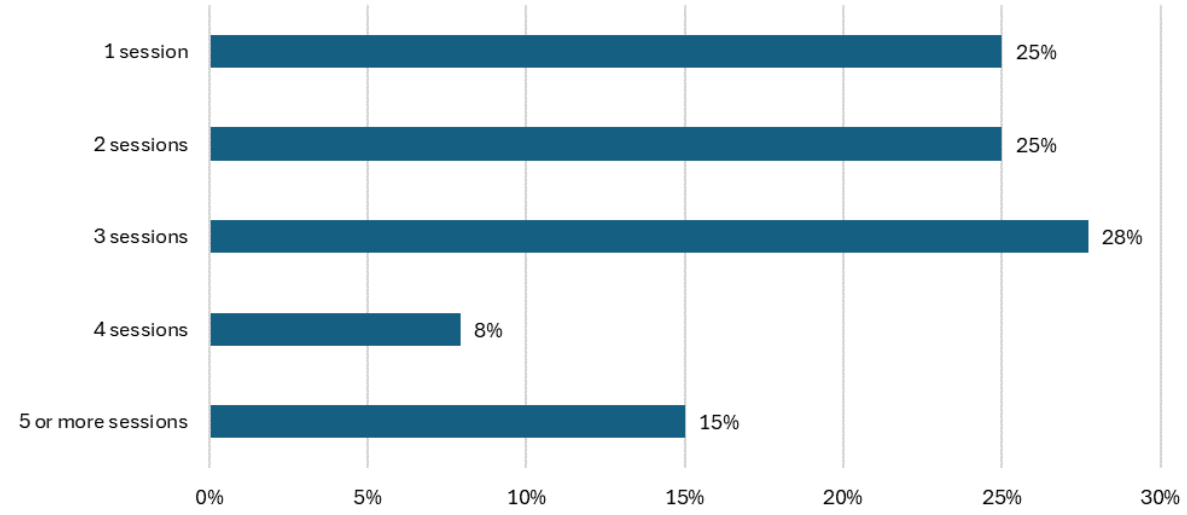
Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 25 Did you get paired with one of your preferred mentors?



Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

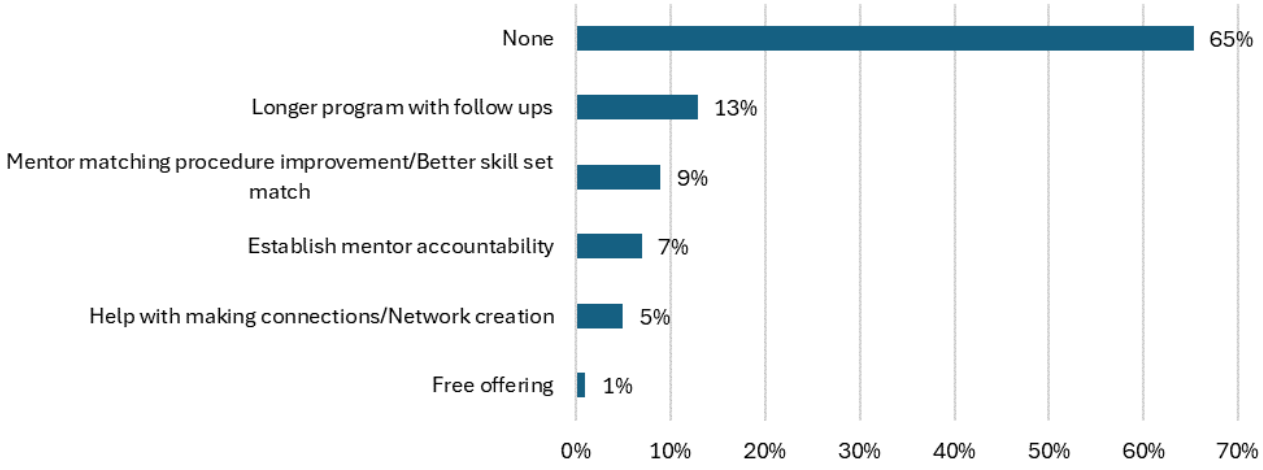
Figure 26 How many mentoring sessions did you attend in total?



Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

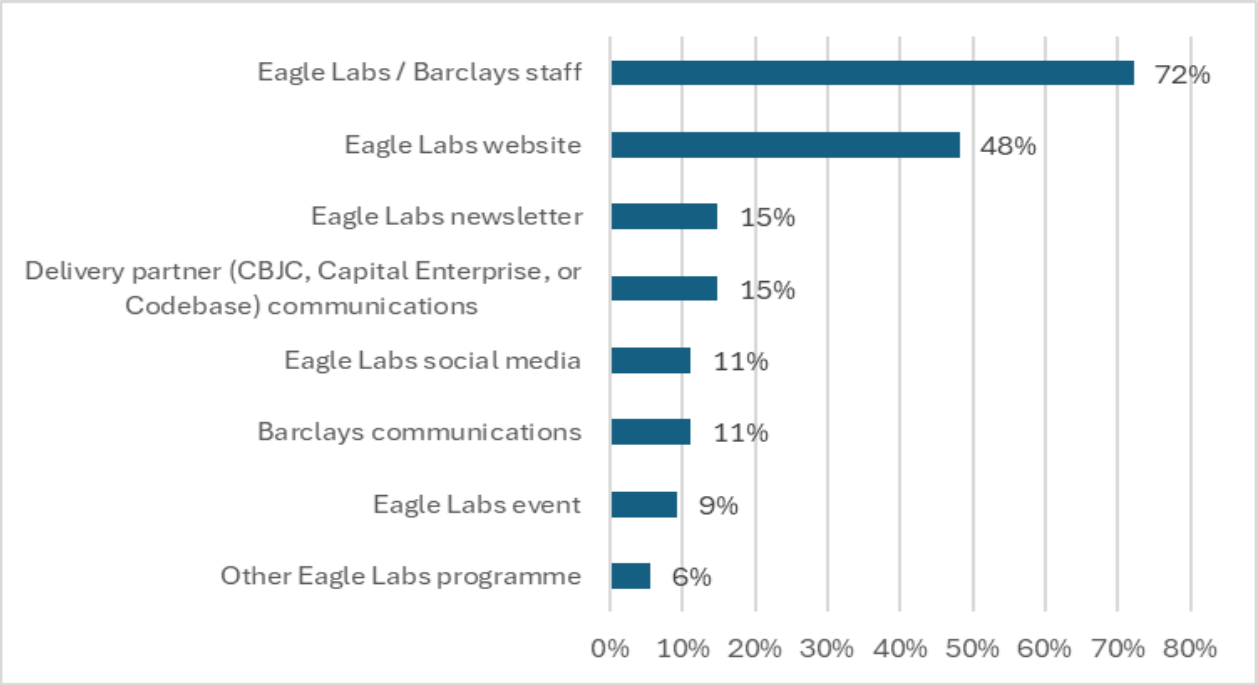
The survey also asked for suggestions and recommendations to improve the programme. This was an open-ended question. However, it was possible to categorise the answers. Figure 27 presents the main findings from the analysis of this question.

Figure 27 Do you have any suggestions/recommendations for how the mentoring programme could be improved in the future?



Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Figure 28 How do you know about the programme?



Source: Frontier Economics, based on Mentoring survey data.

Process insights from interviews with BEL staff:

Selection of delivery partners:

- BEL worked with delivery partners they had worked with in the past, and which had a track record of delivering mentoring programmes at a scale.
- Working with those partners was efficient as working relationships were already established from past experiences. Interviewed BEL staff mentioned that the delivery partners were reliable in meeting (and even exceeding) expectations, with consistent communication and predefined deliverables ensuring smooth operations. Partners were also responsive to requests to expand the pool of mentors to align with emerging needs, demonstrating flexibility and collaboration.

Mentee application process:

- Mentees were applying online and could choose their mentors. BEL staff mentioned that the platform included expert tags and short biographies of mentors, which could help mentees choose their preferred mentors.
- The interviewed BEL staff mentioned that the mentee experience might have been improved by including more details on the mentors and their past work, so the mentees could make a more informed choice. In addition, streamlining the application process online may have reduced the administrative burden for both mentees and BEL staff.

Annex F – Learning platforms

F.1 Activity description

The Learning platforms (LP) programme refers to a set of three activities aimed at providing access to relevant digital content to allow a wider reach of the DGG by providing skills and insights to the ecosystem that would support the DGG's objectives.

The three programmes that are included within the LP are:

1. **Eagle Labs Academy:** A free digital learning platform designed to help tech founders start and scale their businesses. Content on the platform is suitable for potential founders at the ideation stage, startups, and scaleups. The DGG funded the set-up and hosting of the platform, and Barclays funded and owned all content.

2. **LifeSkills:** A free employability and financial skills platform, primarily designed for individuals aged 14 to 19, which can be accessed either independently or through educators. Within the LifeSkills suite, the DGG funded four additional entrepreneurship lessons on Cyber, AI, and sustainability in FY1.

3. **Reports:** Thought leadership reports developed in partnership with Beauhurst, focusing on sharing entrepreneur-led insights. BEL conducted research to identify potential themes, considering current challenges, opportunities, and trends within the ecosystem. This involved desk research and data analysis conducted by Beauhurst, combined with discussions among the team to prioritise topics for the reports.

F.2 Logic model

Evaluation of the Learning & Events programme is conducted using an adapted logic model developed using the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts which are relevant to this programme. The logic model is presented in Annex D and Table 38.

Table 38 Components assessed in the logic model

Component	Sub-component	Description
Inputs	Programme administration funding	BEL staff time for selection of delivery partners, monitoring, marketing, andoverall programme management.
Funding provided to local delivery partners for	Operational costs	Funding for staff costs, marketing, and overheads.
Funding provided to local delivery partners for	Content materials	Content for lessons and reports.
Funding provided to local delivery partners for	Digital platform	Digital delivery platforms for online sessions and providing resources.
Activities	Learning & training	In-person and online sessions on targeted areas, including digital skills, entrepreneurship, business growth, and commercialisation strategies.
Outputs	Number of participants	Total count of individuals and businesses engaged across the programmes (including demographic data).
Outputs	Hours of training or learning	Total hours spent on lessons and reading reports.
Outputs	Number of learning resources, topic guides, or reports published	Total number of learning modules or reports released.
Outputs	User satisfaction	Participant feedback regarding the relevance, quality and effectiveness of the programme activities.
Outcomes	Improved skills and confidence	Participants gain enhanced skills and confidence in areas such as R&D, entrepreneurship, business management, digital marketing, pitching, and presenting.
Outcomes	Enhanced sector awareness	Participants develop a deeper understanding of sector-specific challenges and opportunities.

Impacts	Stronger tech ecosystems	Enhanced innovation and collaboration within local tech communities.
Impacts	More diverse tech sector	Increased diversity and inclusion, with greater participation from underrepresented groups and businesses outside established tech hubs.
Impacts	Workforce Development	A skilled, job-ready workforce equipped with digital and entrepreneurial skills, supporting industry needs and employment.
Impacts	Economic growth	Economic benefits like local employment, GDP growth, and bolstered regional tech clusters.

Source: Frontier Economics.

F.3 Impact evaluation approach

An impact evaluation aims to assess if, to what extent, and how the anticipated impacts identified in the logic model were created.

The evaluation uses monitoring data provided by BEL on the Learning Platform. Data differed for each LP activity:

1. Eagle Labs Academy
2. LifeSkills
3. Reports

Eagle Labs Academy

BEL provided the number of registered users and active users separately via email (correct as of 26 March 2025).

Additional data (correct as of 16 December 2024) on all registered participants of the LP, including Member ID and Date of joining. Although further data was available (such as Business name, industry sector, and regional and EDI flags), those were not highly populated. As such, this data set was not used.

Table 39 presents the completion rates for each of the available metrics for active users.

Table 39 Eagle Labs Academy active users characteristics data coverage

Data item	Information coverage
Business Industry	42%
Business location	44%
Ethnically diverse founder	42%
Female founder	42%
Founder with disabilities	42%
LGBTQ+ founder	42%
Business industry	42%
Business location	44%
Ethnically diverse founder	42%
Female founder	42%

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.

Data on the structure and content available on the LP, including a breakdown of course, module, and lesson titles was provided by BEL. This was combined with a separate data source, which noted the completion of each course by member ID, resource ID, content type, and title, and showed the date the content was completed. Together, the two data sources were used to assess the relevance of the courses (by completion rates).

BEL mentioned in a written communication that the Eagle Labs Academy has received an overall NPS of over 60. However, data to support this claim was not provided.

LifeSkills

Data availability for this activity was limited.

The only data provided was the number of unique teachers who accessed each of the three available modules (as of 16 December 2024). There were no metrics on end-user student reach, meaning that the full reach cannot be evaluated.

Reports

Engagement data (as of 19 December 2024) was available for the 14 reports (10 in FY1 and 4 in FY2) and included the:

- unique website (report) visitors

- page views
- bounce rates
- average time per session
- PDF report downloads

F.4 Process evaluation approach

The process evaluation sought to understand:

- which processes worked well and which could be improved
- what aspects of the programme delivery assisted in the creation of the observed impact
- what has been learned about how to intervene in this intervention space that can be transferred to other initiatives and future appraisals

The process evaluation was based on insights from interviews with BEL staff close to the Learning Platforms.

F.5 Evaluation findings

Eagle Labs Academy

Reach

Data that was provided separately by BEL suggests that, as of 24 March 2025, the Eagle Labs Academy had reached 6,354 registered users and 3,480 active users (those that have completed at least one lesson).

For the overarching discussion of the DGG reach, the evaluation used the number of active users. Since the reach analysis aims to assess the number of individuals who benefited from the programmes, it is more appropriate to refer to the evaluation of the number of active users rather than the number of registered users.

Course and module completion rates

Table 40 presents the number of course completions, and Table 41 presents the number of completions by module.

Table 40 Number of course completions

Courses	Average lesson completion per course	Total lessons per course	Total completions
Starting Your Tech Business	586	20	10,921
Product Development and Design	272	13	2,567
Leadership and Management	135	7	945
Marketing and Sales	131	15	1,986
Scaling and Growth	98	15	1,506
Raising Capital	85	31	2,643

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.
Note: We excluded three courses in 'Product Development and Design' to estimate the average completion rate per course.

Table 41 Count of module completions

Course	Modules	Completion per module
Starting Your Tech Business	Explore your business idea	1,455.7
Starting Your Tech Business	Developing the right mindset	487.3
Starting Your Tech Business	Manage your personal circumstances	315.3
Starting Your Tech Business	Working with co-founders	278
Starting Your Tech Business	Setting up your new venture	393
Product Development and Design	Business planning	349.3
Product Development and Design	Finding product-market fit	195
Raising Capital	Introduction to fundraising	222

Course	Modules	Completion per module
Raising Capital	Building an investment-ready startup	81.9
Raising Capital	The perfect pitch playbook	13
Raising Capital	The valuation playbook	87.2
Raising Capital	Grant funding explainer	22.8
Marketing and Sales	Marketing foundations	139.7
Marketing and Sales	Introduction to sales	121.5
Leadership and Management	Team building foundations	135
Scaling and Growth	Preparing to Scale	112.4
Scaling and Growth	Continuous product development and innovation	94.3
Scaling and Growth	How to scale your sales and marketing	87.2

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.

Three of the lessons in the 'Product Development and Design' course, specifically the 'Business Planning' module, had zero completions.

BEL provided verbal data that the Eagle Labs Academy has received an overall NPS of over 60, showing that users are broadly satisfied with the experience.

Possible benefits of the programmes

The interviewed BEL staff identified the following as possible benefits of the programmes:

- The Eagle Labs Academy provides free, flexible, online, and self-paced learning opportunities.
- The Academy's modular nature covered a broad range of topics, from raising finance to scaling businesses. Because the content is curated to different stages of business development, it can provide pathways for continuous skills development. Users can tailor their learning to make it most relevant to the challenges they currently face.

No further evidence was collected to support those claims.

Process evaluation insights

The interviewed BEL staff identified the following process insights:

- Enhancing feedback mechanisms could further guide content direction by better understanding user interactions.
- Having more structured user testing pre-launch could improve user experience and content accessibility on the LP.
- Without DGG's support, Barclays would likely continue developing such resources, but potentially at a reduced scope and with delayed rollout.

LifeSkills

Reach

- Enterprise Project Challenge: 442 unique teachers
- Sustainability, business and entrepreneurship: 162 unique teachers
- Entrepreneurship, innovation and digital technology: 271 unique teachers

No further data was provided for the end users' reach or the content that was included in those modules.

Possible benefits of the programmes

The interviewed BEL staff identified the following as possible benefits from the programmes:

- The LifeSkills platform, which targets 14 to 19-year-olds, might benefit from widespread availability through registered educational partners who deliver the content to numerous students (data on those was not available).
- In the LifeSkills platform, curated content is aimed at fostering awareness of entrepreneurship and effectively preparing young adults for possible entrepreneurial paths.
- The delivery of the programme might have increased awareness about tech entrepreneurship among those aged 14 to 19. However, the lack of data restricts the ability to measure the outputs and outcomes of this programme.
- An area for improvement is integrating more comprehensive tracking of classroom activities by teachers who have received the content. This could allow for a more detailed evaluation of the impact and support content refinement in the future.

Process evaluation insights

The interviewed BEL staff identified the following process insights:

- The LifeSkills modules funded by the DGG were chosen by BEL based on their potential to inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs.
- BEL collaborated with educational providers, seeking their input through research conducted by their external partner.

- The feedback from educational providers helped determine themes such as working in startups and entrepreneurship.
- The content was developed into lesson plans with insights on resonating topics for students.
- Barclays' internal processes have been generally effective in leveraging long-standing partnerships to deliver the LifeSkills platform and modules.
- A key area for improvement is the development of more robust metrics for the LifeSkills platform, enabling deeper insights into user engagement and module impact.

Reports

Reach

Table 42 summarises the metrics provided by BEL for 12 out of the 14 reports (10 produced in FY1 and 4 in FY2).

Table 42 Reports analysed metrics

Item	number
Unique reports (total FY1 and FY2)	14
Number of reports with information in the dataset	12
Unique viewers	4,739
Page views (total)	7,282
Page views (average)	607
Bounce rates (average)	53%
Average time per session (minutes)	2.53
PDF downloads	2,611
PDF downloads – average per report	218

Source: Frontier Economics, based on data from BEL.

In addition, the data showed that:

- the least popular report was 'Engineering Biology' (not considering the 'Growth Infrastructure' report, which was the last to be published), which received 183 unique views)
- the most popular report was 'Neurodiversity (TEN)', which was one of the latest reports to be published and achieved 787 unique views
- the report 'Unlocking Investment' received mid-level engagement with 427 unique views (though that was the second report that was published)

Possible benefits of the programmes

The interviewed BEL staff identified the following as possible benefits of the programmes:

- The thought leadership reports have successfully resonated with both current and potential entrepreneurs.
- The reports have effectively fostered understanding among founders of tech sector challenges and opportunities. The reports have successfully informed and engaged the tech sector community with the aim of inspiring new and existing entrepreneurs.
- Barclays has maximised the reach of its reports by leveraging both direct and partner-led dissemination channels and using social media and newsletters, ensuring broad awareness through digital engagement.

There is no data on the diversity of the reports' reach, so this cannot be assessed.

Process evaluation insights

The interviewed BEL staff identified the following process insights:

- The reports are developed in partnership with Beauhurst. For the production process, Barclays relied on Beauhurst's expertise in gathering proprietary data, combined with insights from Barclays, such as the Flagship report, which surveys the tech community directly. This process ensured the reports offer unique value and are not duplicative of existing materials.
- BEL's strategy report planning helped maintain the relevance of the reports by focusing on emerging industry needs.
- The alignment with policy changes resulting from this close working relationship enhanced the report's reach due to the collaborations that led to government-backed releases.
- The collaboration with Beauhurst has been effective, as it allowed Barclays to capitalise on its existing knowledge and connections within the ecosystem.
- One area for future improvement would be more streamlined communication and co-development sessions, which would ensure even closer alignment on report themes and a faster production cycle.
- Expanding joint efforts on visibility could enhance the dissemination of reports and audience engagement.
- A key improvement area is streamlining the report production to avoid fatigue among the audience and our team, focusing on quality over quantity.

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